

CAPITALISM, JUSTICE, AND HUMAN AUTONOMY

by

Ilker Aslantepe

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Economics

The University of Utah

August 2012

Copyright © Ilker Aslantepe 2012

All Rights Reserved

The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

The thesis of **Ilker Aslantepe**
has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Korkut Erturk, Chair **05/29/2012**
Date Approved

Minqi Li, Member **05/29/2012**
Date Approved

Al Campbell, Member **05/29/2012**
Date Approved

and by **Thomas Maloney**, Chair of
the Department of **Economics**

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the writings of Robert Nozick, G. A. Cohen, and Karl Marx on capitalism, justice, and human autonomy, especially in connection with the conceptualization of capitalism, exploitation, equality, human autonomy, consciousness, self-realization, self-actualization, and justice.

According to Nozick, capitalism is the freest and most just society because he believes it respects the individual rights based on *self-ownership*, the view that people own themselves and they own whatever they produce. Cohen, on the other hand, believes that Nozick's theory is not compatible with any notion of equality and autonomy, and thus, lacks any commitment to a just society. For him, Nozick tries to justify the inequalities that emerge under a regime based on private property. Also, Cohen thinks that there are close affinities between Marx's critique of capitalism and the libertarian challenge to egalitarianism, in that, both are based on the concept of self-ownership. According to Cohen, because Marx's critique of capitalism is based on moral grounds as an unjust and exploitative social system, his concept of exploitation and the labor theory value are unnecessary or irrelevant for the moral claim that labor is exploited under capitalism. The moral argument has little to do with the extraction of surplus labor as such, but rather with social, distributive injustice.

Against this argument advanced by Cohen, this study juxtaposes Marx's notion of exploitation as a characteristic of all class societies, in general, and capitalist exploitation in particular. It shows how the critique of capitalism based on a theory of justice differs

from Marx's own critique based on the notion that capitalism undermines human autonomy forming a barrier to real human freedom based on a life of consciousness, self-realization, and self-actualization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
CHAPTERS	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. G. A. COHEN’S EGALITARIAN ANALYTICAL MARXISM, CAPITALISM, AND JUSTICE AND HIS CRITIQUE OF MARXISM.....	8
Introduction.....	8
G. A. Cohen’s Egalitarian Analytical Marxism.....	9
G. A. Cohen’s Critique of Marxism, Capitalism, and Justice	11
Concluding Remarks	20
III. ROBERT NOZICK’S LIBERTARIAN PHILOSOPHY, CAPITALISM, AND JUSTICE, AND G. A. COHEN’S CRITIQUE OF NOZICK: INCOMPATIBILITY OF SELF-OWNERSHIP WITH EQUALITY AND AUTONOMY	27
Introduction.....	27
Nozick’s Libertarian Philosophy, Capitalism, and Justice	30
Nozick’s Theory of Rights.....	30
Nozick’s Theory of Minimal State for Justice	33
The Nozickian Proviso.....	36
Nozick’s Entitlement Theory of Justice.....	37
A Critique of Robert Nozick’s Libertarian Philosophy of Justice	39
Introduction	39
A Critique of Nozick’s Theory of Justice by Cohen: Incompatibility of Self-ownership with Equality and Autonomy.....	40
Beyond the Irreconcilability of Self-ownership with Equality and Autonomy	50
Concluding Remarks	61

IV. KARL MARX’S ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM AND HIS CONCEPT OF JUSTICEAND HUMAN AUTONOMY	64
Introduction.....	64
Karl Marx’s Analysis of Labor and Capitalism	67
Karl Marx on Justice and Morality	79
Karl Marx’s Critique of Capitalism and Human Autonomy	82
Concluding Remarks	92
V. CONCLUSION	101
Concluding Overview of The Chapters of The Thesis	101
Future Study.....	107
REFERENCES.....	108

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the capable and generous advising of Dr. Korkut Erturk. My greatest debt in writing this thesis is to him. He has spent innumerable and invaluable hours talking about the issues discussed here. I feel indebted to him for his patience and understanding in every stage of my study, as well as for his continued support since the first day I attended his course, *Capitalism and Socialism*. Chapters II and III have been noticeably improved by helpful comments, criticisms, and suggestions of Dr. Al Campbell. I have received detailed and very helpful written comments on the manuscript from him. I am also grateful to him for chairing my thesis committee, which he kindly consented to do from his emeritus position. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Minqi Li for all his help and support and providing me a unique opportunity to study analytical Marxism for a term paper.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank Gökçem, as a friend, a comrade, a teacher, a mentor, and a spouse for her love and unique support. She has had a great role in shaping my ideas presented here. Her objections and recommendations to some of the positions defended here, have helped me to sharpen my views. More importantly, she has taught me that while the unexamined life is not worth living, the examined life is worth sharing. Last but not least, I would also like to thank my family for their unique, continuous help and encouragement, and for having a deep human sensitivity and reminding me, “I am a man, I consider nothing that is human alien to me.”

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*“Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto...”*¹

Even though the end of Marxism was declared long ago by many, the specter of Karl Marx (1818-1883) still haunts the world today. The enduring appeal of Marx’s writings rests on its thorough, detailed analysis and critique of capitalism. For some, D. Allen (1981), G. Young (1981), A. Buchanan (1981), Z. Husami (1980) and G. A. Cohen (1995), Marx’s view of capitalism is that of an exploitative and unjust social system, which raises the issue of whether there should be, or even could be, a Marxist theory of justice and morality. If a Marxist theory of justice is articulated, what sort of a moral theory should it be based on? Conversely, others like R. Tucker (1965, 1969) and A. Wood (1972, 1980), claim that Marx does not condemn capitalism or any other social formation for being unjust or any other moral shortcoming, denying the notion that his analysis of capitalism has any moral underpinnings. Thus, the question remains whether Marx’s analysis and critique of capitalism rests on some moral theory.

Other writers who probe the normative elements of Marx’s works, such as Norman Geras (1985a, 1985b, 1992), Steven Lukes (1985), and Lawrence Wilde (1998), argue that there is inconsistency in Marx’s works between his ethical commitment and

¹ A famous quote by Publius Terentius Afer (195/185 – 159 BC), better known in English as Terence, in his play *Heauton Timorumenos* (The Self-Tormentor), reads: “I am a man, and nothing that concerns a man do I deem a matter of indifference to me” (Terence, 1679, p. 68; Riley, 1909, p. 209).

his hostility to moral argument. They argue that in some sense Marx thinks that the process through which surplus value is produced is just, as each mode of production has norms of justice appropriate to it; but they remark that he also condemns capitalism in moral terms because in various writings he describes the extraction of surplus value as robbing, theft, and stealing from the workers.

Thus, it is not surprising that the notion of justice implicit in Marx's writings has been a big subject of discussion in the analytical Marxist literature. Especially, a thesis developed by G. A. Cohen (1941-2009), a leading analytical Marxist about the normative basis of Marx's conceptualization of capitalism, has been at the center of much debate. In his *Self-ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (SOFE), Cohen argues that Marx condemns capitalism on moral grounds because he thinks that capitalism is an unjust and exploitative social system. The core of Cohen's thesis is the claim that Marx characterizes the appropriation of surplus value as an act of robbing, theft, etc. However, according to Cohen, the relationship between Marx's critique of capitalism and his concept of exploitation and the labor theory value is irrelevant. Cohen believes that they are unnecessary to the moral claim that labor is exploited because the central issue is not how the extraction of surplus labor takes place, but how it involves social injustice.

Cohen finds parallels between Marx's critique of capitalism and the libertarian challenge to egalitarianism arguing that his theory of exploitation shares similarities with Robert Nozick's (1938-2002) concept of *self-ownership*, which explains the inviolability of human autonomy in libertarianism. According to Cohen, the notion of self-ownership, the view that people own themselves and they own whatever they produce, is implicit in a Marxist account of exploitation, which explains why Marx sees exploitation as some kind

of *theft* of the worker's labor time by the capitalist who gets what rightfully belongs to the worker (Cohen, 1995, p. 117). Marxism's reliance on the concept of self-ownership is, as he puts it, "latent in the standard Marxist condemnation of exploitation, and it is therefore difficult for Marxists to reject libertarianism ..." (Cohen, 1995, p. 12). Cohen, however, argues that there is an inconsistency in Marx between his adherences to the concept of self-ownership and his underlying moral critique. Because the principle of self-ownership is antithetical to equality and autonomy and does lead to inequality, exploitation and slavery, he holds that Marxists must reject self-ownership. Therefore, Cohen claims, Marxism "has failed to distinguish itself (sufficiently thoroughly) ... [from] libertarianism ... who affirms the principle of self-ownership, which occupies a prominent place in the ideology of capitalism" (Cohen, 1995, p. 116). Cohen then concludes that contemporary Marxists need to become more straightforwardly egalitarian in their theory by rethinking about their concept of exploitation and normative ethics in order to be consistent. This calls for a substantial revision of the labor theory of value (LTV) and a more explicit restatement of the normative critique of capitalist exploitation along with the alternative visions of equality and autonomy Marxism upholds. Thus, because the Marxist critique of capitalism is beset by incoherence, Cohen argues that contemporary Marxists should become more consistently egalitarian and criticize capitalism on the grounds of social injustice (Cohen, 1995, pp. 158-9).

Cohen's analysis is not, however, the only possible interpretation of Marx's works on exploitation, equality, human autonomy, and justice. In fact, the objective of this study is to outline an alternative and arguably more accurate interpretation of Marx that pulls the rug out from under many of Cohen's arguments.

This thesis consists of five chapters with introductions. Chapter II gives a critical overview of Cohen's interpretation of Marxism. This chapter does not aim to chronologically examine the development of Cohen's socialist ideas and his arguments, but examines his approach to equality and freedom, and his critique of Marx's theory. It specifically focuses on Cohen's political and philosophical shift to analytical Marxism and his engagement with political philosophy, especially with Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Cohen, 1995, pp. 1-4).

Chapter III explores Robert Nozick's libertarian philosophy and his theory of justice for three reasons: 1) Nozick defends private property on grounds of justice and thinks unfettered capitalism maximizes freedom, so it is the most free and just society, 2) his book, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (ASU) is considered the central text for all contemporary academic discussion of justice and capitalism in liber(al)tarian-ism,² and 3) Cohen claims that there are close affinities between libertarianism and Marxism. The present chapter concentrates on Nozick's famous book, *ASU*, in which his concepts of capitalism, justice and individual rights based on self-ownership are elaborated. For the remainder of the chapter, Cohen's response to the foundations of libertarianism and the implications of Nozick's theory are explored and the principles that make up the foundation of the Nozickian theory of justice and property are examined. Also, for a detailed analysis of Nozick's theory of justice, in addition to Cohen's critique of libertarianism, some points, which are important components of Nozick's concept but untouched by Cohen, are explored.

² I use the term *liber(al)tarian* because I define the libertarians as a type of classical liberal, distinguished from other classical liberals by their extreme positions on morality issues and by their style of political theorizing, which is characterized by the principles of abstract individualism. So, the very word libertarian is a synonym for market fundamentalist and radical free marketeer liberal. It is worth noting that a satisfactory discussion of liber(al)tarian-ism falls far beyond the scope of this project.

In attempting to explore Marx's analysis and critique of capitalism, Chapter IV presents a rereading of Marx's *Capital* (1972a) to comprehend the characteristics of capitalist production and the social character of men's own labor. The chapter quotes frequently and extensively from the works of Marx, which admittedly makes for an awkward style of presentation. Yet, that is what is required given that the interpretations of Marx's writings differ widely, especially on the major themes of this study. The labor theory of value and Marx's analysis of the nature of the labor process under capitalism are taken in the chapter as the necessary foundations of his critique of capitalism in terms of the damage it inflicts on human beings. Marx's conceptualization of value is an expression of the sociality of labor and thus, central to an understanding of his notions of human autonomy and development and why he thinks the capitalist mode of production impairs and distorts human potential and development (Hunt, 1992, p. 104). Also, before discussing Marx's critique of capitalism, the second part of the chapter explores Marx's writings about justice and morality addressing the question whether Marx condemns capitalism on moral grounds. Finally, attention is drawn to Marx's critique of capitalism as a socioeconomic system that undermines human autonomy on the basis of alienation, and commodity fetishism. In addition, the writings of Carl Jung and Abraham Maslow are briefly discussed to elaborate the concept of *totality of man*, which is central to Marx's thought. Finally, the last chapter provides a brief comparison of the ideas presented in this work.

In conclusion, this work juxtaposes Marx's notion of exploitation as a characteristic of all class societies, in general, and capitalist exploitation in particular. It shows that capitalist exploitation is intrinsic to the mode of production and a specific

form of extraction that includes viewing *labor power* as a commodity while it is a technical process which satisfies capital's needs for surplus labor to move according to its own "laws of motion." It also argues that exploitation is the particular social relations of capitalism that give to capital and capitalists control of all labor process. On the other hand, this work argues that an exploitation centered critique of capitalism lacks a proper understanding of the features of capitalism and that it is "naïve" to think of appropriation of surplus value by the capitalist as the defining characteristic of injustice of capitalism. Marx's own critique is based on the notion that capitalism undermines human autonomy, forming a barrier to real human freedom based on a life of consciousness, self-realization, and self-actualization. In Chapter IV, it is argued that human autonomy, self-realization, and self-actualization are critical issues in Marx's view of capitalism.

"Nothing human is alien to me", Terence's line in his drama *The Self-Tormentor*, is said to be always met with loud applause (Riley, 1909, p. 209), a refutation of selfishness and self-interest and a tribute to the social nature of man as epitomized in the humanistic view of him. Since today is a picture of the change in the notions which underlie the structure of society, the present study is an attempt that tries to examine the impact of the existing society on human autonomy, self-realization, self-actualization, individuality, and sociality. It is part of an ongoing effort to understand how sociality, individuality, and the unity of different aspects of man, under existing society, have been broken into separate entities, how man became not self-determining but a victim of circumstances, chained to specialized tasks as an isolated, alienated, and egoistical

individual. Therefore, at the entrance to the present study, the demand is: “Here must all distrust be left behind; all cowardice must be here dead” (Marx, 1970, p. 23).³

³ These lines quoted from English translation of Dante’s *Divina Commedia* in Marx.

CHAPTER II

G. A. COHEN'S EGALITARIAN ANALYTICAL MARXISM, CAPITALISM, AND JUSTICE AND HIS CRITIQUE OF MARXISM

Introduction

G. A. Cohen was raised in a family with leftist leanings and with parents who were actively involved in the Marxist movement of their time (Cohen, 1995, pp. 245-7).⁴ He pursued a career in academia and taught political philosophy for the first part of his career. He studied and wrote about dialectic materialism and Karl Marx's theory of history, but spent little time studying any other political philosophies because he believed that socialism was self evidently so much more superior than anything else. Cohen's research interests began to shift to political philosophy and the concepts of justice and capitalism after he read Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Cohen, 1995, pp. 1-4).

The following first explores the shift in Cohen's political and philosophical views, and then investigates his critique of Marxism for its reliance, in his view, on the notion of self-ownership, which, he believes, is not compatible with any commitment to justice. Cohen asserts that Marx's critique of capitalism, the theory of exploitation, rests implicitly on a normative premise that is also the foundation of libertarianism: self-

⁴ Cohen was born in Montreal in 1941 and his parents and he were active members of the working class movement in Montreal, which was vigorous until 1956.

ownership: “each person enjoys, over herself and her powers, full and exclusive rights of control and use, and therefore owes no service or product to anyone else that she has not contracted to supply” (Cohen, 1995, p. 12). In *SOFE*, in response to Robert Nozick’s libertarianism in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Cohen shows that self-ownership and any moral commitment to equality and autonomy cannot coexist because self-ownership cannot be compatible with equality and autonomy; the point of libertarianism is to provide a form of justification for capitalist inequality in libertarianism. However, Cohen remarks that after he read Nozick’s book *ASU*, it caused in him an intellectual crisis, as it made him realize that “an appeal to self-ownership is latent in the standard Marxist condemnation of exploitation.” He thus, came to the conclusion that “it is difficult for Marxists to reject libertarianism” (Cohen, 1995, p. 12). Since self-ownership does lead to inequality, exploitation and slavery, Cohen argues that Marx’s concept of exploitation is incoherent because it is based on this very concept (Cohen, 1995, pp. 158-9). Cohen therefore subscribes to Egalitarian Analytical Marxism in contradiction to traditional Marxism which, he holds, has little to say about what justice is. Therefore, he is interested in the political philosophy of justice, equality, and exploitation rather than the extraction of surplus value (Cohen, 1995, p. 3).

G. A. Cohen’s Egalitarian Analytical Marxism

At the beginning of Chapter VI of his book *Self-ownership, Freedom, and Equality*, Cohen describes himself as a member of a school of analytical Marxism whose members are “concerned with exactly what a commitment to equality requires, and with exactly what sort of obligations productive and talented people have to people who are relatively unproductive, or handicapped, or in special need” (Cohen, 1995, p. 144). And

he declares that analytical Marxists “seek a precise definition of what exploitation is, and ... [they] want to know exactly why it is wrong” (Cohen, 1995, p. 144).

In his *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (2000),⁵ Cohen explains his departure from Marxism at a theoretical level. He says that he dispensed with traditional Marxism because he does not think that “Marxism possesses a distinctive and valuable method” (Cohen, 2000, p. xxii). According to him, the dialectical method of traditional Marxism lacks clear meaning in comparison to his logical and linguistic techniques that can “explain molar phenomena by reference to micro-constituents and micro-mechanisms” (Cohen, 2000, p. xxiii). And, Cohen adds, “a micro-analysis is always desirable and always in principle possible, even if it is not always possible to achieve one in practice at a given stage of development of a particular discipline” (Cohen, 2000, p. xxiii). In Jon Elster's view, Cohen has “changed the standards of rigor and clarity that were required to write on Marx and Marxism” (Elster, 1985 p. xiv). Another Analytical Marxist John E. Roemer, labels it “l'école du marxisme analytique” as a *sophisticated* version of Marxism which exercises “contemporary tools of logic, mathematics and model building” in portraying “a non-dogmatic approach to Marxism” (Roemer, 1986, pp. 1-2). This “non-dogmatic approach to Marxism,” or “Nonbullshit Marxism” (Cohen, 1995, p. ix; Cohen, 2000, p. xxv) employs rational choice theory and methodological individualism as the standard and necessary ingredients to make Analytical Marxism more *scientific* and

⁵ The first edition of Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History* published in 1978. It is a core original work of Analytical Marxism and established Cohen as a leading Marxist in the 1980s. The 2000 edition of it is expanded and includes an introduction on analytical Marxism. In this book Cohen sets out the defense of historical materialism, on the grounds of technological determinism, in which he interprets history as fundamentally the growth of human productive power, and forms of society rise and fall accordingly as they enable or impede that growth (Cohen, 2000, p. x). His *History, Labor, and Freedom* revealed a shift from the theory of history to the morality of exploitation which he pursues for the rest of his academic career.

rigorous than traditional Marxism (Hunt, 1992, p. 94; Kumar, 2008, p. 185; Lebowitz, 1988, p. 199).

In his work on Marx's concept of exploitation, Roemer argues that although exploitation involves unequal exchange and that is an intrinsic feature of capitalism that is unjust, it is an unreliable indicator of its normative objectionability (Roemer, 1985, p. 31-3). Cohen believes that the upshot of Roemer's argument, like his own, is to force Marxists to become more consistently egalitarian, because, he thinks, Marx's concept of exploitation lacks fundamental normative significance for a critique of capitalism as an unjust socioeconomic system (Cohen, 1990, p. 382).

G.A. Cohen argues that Marx's concept of exploitation rests on self-ownership, the view that people own themselves and whatever they produce, a common ground between traditional Marxism and libertarianism. According to him, this makes traditional Marxism vulnerable to a libertarian challenge to its commitment to the ideal of equality for a just society. For Cohen, Marxism has lost most of its *factual carapace* with respect to the value of equality (Cohen, 1995, p. 6). He argues that Marxists are better advised to abandon the theory of exploitation and criticize capitalism on the grounds of equality and justice.

G. A. Cohen's Critique of Marxism, Capitalism, and Justice

In *Self-ownership, Freedom, and Equality*, a collection of his articles that examines the relationship between concepts of self-ownership, freedom, and equality, Cohen argues that Marx holds that the capitalist mode of production is unjustly exploitative because the capitalist is guilty of the *theft* of the worker's labor time. He argues that the reason why Marx's concept of exploitation rests on self-ownership is

because the concept's appeal derives from the labor theory of value and the concept of being a *self-owner* with the ideas of i) not being a slave, ii) possessing autonomy, and iii) not being used merely as a means (Cohen, 1995, p. 230). Therefore, Cohen concludes that there is significant common ground between Marxism and libertarianism which makes Marxism vulnerable to a libertarian challenge to its commitment to freedom, equality, and justice. Cohen accordingly recommends that Marxists should abandon the concept of exploitation in their critique of capitalism on the grounds of justice. Then, he declares that his purpose is to liberate Marxism from its inconsistencies (Cohen, 1998, p. 90).

Cohen argues that Marx relies on the principle of self-ownership because according to Marx, capitalism, like all previous class societies, rested on exploitation and that means the forcible appropriation of workers' labor and its product, which he characterizes frequently as *theft*, and *robbery*. After asking why Marx should use these terms unless he believes that the workers' products are rightfully theirs as an extension of themselves and their powers, he concludes that the Marxist position is not distinguished from libertarianism.

For reference purposes, it is worth recording in some detail Cohen's arguments for his claim that Marx's concept of exploitation is based on the libertarian principle of self-ownership and that Marxists have not distanced themselves from the self-ownership thesis. Cohen writes:

Marxists say that capitalists steal labor time from working people. But you can steal from someone only that which properly belongs to him. The Marxist critique of capitalist injustice therefore implies that the worker is the proper owner of his own labor time: he, no one else, has the right to decide what will be done with it. But he could hardly have that right without having the right to decide what to do with his own capacity to work, his labor power. [Marxist critique of capitalism]

... therefore implies that the worker is the proper owner of his own power. But Marxists could not think [this] ... unless they thought the same is true of people in general. Hence the Marxist contention that the capitalist exploits the worker depends on the proposition that people are the rightful owners of their own powers. That proposition is the thesis of self-ownership, and I claim that it undergirds the Marxist case for the proposition that the capitalist relationship is inherently exploitative. (Cohen, 1995, p. 146-7)

The traditional Marxist thesis ... is that forcible appropriation of another's labor time and product by virtue of ownership of means of production is unjust. ... It does not matter, for that claim, what sort of capitalist, or what sort of worker, we are talking about. (Cohen, 1995, p. 149)

[But] ... how could you consider that relationship to be one of unjust exploitation without affirming the worker's self-ownership ... if Marxists think (as they undoubtedly do) that it is wrong to force a surplus out of the worker, then that would be explained by a belief that doing so violates the worker's rights over his own powers. (Cohen, 1995, p. 150)

[Marxists'] uncritical belief that extraction of product from a worker through the instrumentality of capital ownership is, as such, unjust. ...so, their unreflective doctrine of exploitation commits Marxists to an affirmation of the principle of self-ownership ... Through their [Marxists'] uncompromising line on the capital/labor relationship, Marxists come implicitly to accept the notion of self-ownership, ... [which is the foundation of liber(al)tarian-ism and contradicts the idea of] equality of benefits and burdens among people. (Cohen, 1995, pp. 150-1)

Cohen is basically saying that the Marxist thesis of exploitation amounts to the claim that capitalists steal from workers. He believes that Marx thinks the *exploitation* is unjust because the "transfer of product from the worker to the capitalist involves what Marx called "the theft of another person's labor time" (Cohen, 1995, p. 145). To support this claim, Cohen identifies a number of passages where Marx describes the relation between capitalist and labor not only as exploitative, but also one involving theft, and robbery (Cohen, 1995, pp. 144-64).⁶ In his view, Marx should be interpreted as implying that exploitation is wrong because capitalists unjustly steal labor time from laborer. He

⁶ Chapter IV argues that Cohen's arguments for his critique of Marx's concept of exploitation relies heavily on a very literalistic reading of *theft* and *steal* in some of Marx's writings; rather, it consistently relies on French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), who sloganeered, "Property is theft" in his 1840 book *What is Property*.

argues that terms such as theft, robbery, and unequal exchange, strongly suggest that Marx sees capitalist exploitation as unjust.⁷ He adds, however, that if appropriation of labor is unjustly exploitative because it violates rights individuals have to their person and property, according to this logic, one would need to view state taxation as unjustly exploitative as well, even though it supports the disabled and unemployed (Cohen, 1990, p. 365).

Cohen claims that there are three distinct features that “Marxist account of exploitation” carries a “redolence of injustice.” He explains these three distinct features as follows: a) workers are at the short end of an unequal distribution of means of production, b) they are forced to work as others direct them to, c) they are forced to yield surplus product to others. Then, he adds that even though the Marxist theory says that (a) causes each of (b) and (c), each of these features is an independent statement, and “any one of them ... [can exist] without the other two, and any two without the third” (Cohen, 1995, pp. 195-6). Cohen explains one can choose to die, which would make him free from means of production, or one can own little means of production but choose to work *autarchically*, so only (a) would be true. Likewise, “if the workers are endowed with means of production but forced to work at gunpoint by an oppressor who reaps nothing from their labor,” then only (b) would be true. If the oppressor takes some part of what they produce by force, then only (c) would be true (Cohen, 1995, p. 196).

Cohen believes that when confronted with these difficulties, Marxists should give up their reliance on self-ownership. However, there is a theoretical price to be paid; for it means giving up the traditional account of exploitation that rests on self-ownership. This

⁷ This claim has become the ideological touchstone of Analytical Marxist arguments. For example, see Wood, 1986; Roemer, 1985; Van Parijs, 1995.

calls for substantial revision in the labor theory of value (LTV) and the adoption of a normative understanding of capitalist exploitation and inequality.

Cohen asserts in his article *The Labor Theory of Value and the Concept of Exploitation* that the LTV and exploitation are mutually irrelevant, and holds that the theory of exploitation should be independent of it (Cohen, 1979, p. 338). He adds that the LTV is not a suitable basis for the charge of exploitation that Marxists use in their critique of capitalism, because Marx's critique of capitalism is based on a particular notion of justice, and his use of the term *exploitation* denotes a kind injustice (Cohen, 1979, p. 341). He concludes that the traditional Marxist argument is incomplete because a normative basis is not stated (Cohen, 1979, p. 343).

Cohen summarizes Marx's writings on the analysis of the capitalist mode of production in the following order (Cohen, 1979, pp. 340-2): 1) socially necessary labor time determines value. 2) Value determines equilibrium price, which means that 1 and 2 together entail: 3) socially necessary labor time determines equilibrium price.⁸ 4) Labor, and labor, alone creates value. 5) The laborer receives the value of his labor power. 6) The value of the product is greater than the value of his labor power. 7) The laborer receives less value than he creates. 8) The capitalist receives the remaining value. 9) The laborer is exploited by the capitalist. 10) One reason for overthrowing capitalism is that it is a regime of exploitation (and exploitation is unjust).⁹

Cohen later modifies 4 to show the irrelevance of the LTV for exploitation: "The laborer is the only person who creates the product, that which has value" (Cohen, 1979,

⁸ Cohen argues that 3 is not true by definition, and says that 3 is falsified. If 3 is falsified, then, 1 and 2 must be questioned. Then, he concludes that 2 is true by definition, so premise 1 is falsified: it must not be the case that socially necessary labor time determines value, for him.

⁹ The article 10 is originally numbered 4 in Cohen's article to give the points of Marxists in advance.

p. 356).¹⁰ He argues that Marx confuses the notion that labor alone creates value with the distinct idea that labor alone produces what has value. For him, such a small difference in phrasing implies an enormous difference of conception (Cohen, 1988, p. 238). He thinks that the value of a product can be determined by many factors other than labor. According to him, the idea that labor is the sole creator of what has value is the foundation of the charge that capitalism is a system of exploitation. Cohen concludes that what explains the difference between the value the laborer produces and the value he receives matters little, because it is irrelevant and unnecessary to the moral claim Marxists make when they say that capitalism is exploitative. “What matters is just that there is that difference” (Cohen, 1979, p. 344). Therefore, for Cohen, the LTV is unnecessary to the moral claim that labor is being exploited; it is just a visible manifestation of the Marxists’ ideological position (Cohen, 1979, p. 345; Cohen, 1995, p. 174).

In Chapter VII of his book *SOFE*, titled *Marx and Locke on Land and Labor*, Cohen says that Marx means “that capital came into being when and because exploitable labor did, as a consequence of the resource dispossession of precapitalist peasants” when he writes, “The expropriation of the ... peasant from the soil was the basis of the whole process” (Cohen, 1995, p. 168). Given that, “according to Marx, it was a critical loss of natural resources that generated the proletariat” (Cohen, 1995, p. 168). Cohen then asks why, “if lack of land brought the proletariat into being,” what they now lack is not raw resources but the means of production (Cohen, 1995, p. 168). For Cohen, it is apparent

¹⁰ This means anything can create value. For example, according to Cohen, a desire or monopolistic control of production can create value even though they are nonlabor resources. However, for him, they can even enable capitalists to exploit workers. In Cohen’s point of view, this reality is ignored by Marx(ists) because the LTV makes world resources worthless (Cohen, 1979, p. 356; Cohen, 1995, p. 174).

that “the land endowment of the whole planet” is crucial to understand the creation of proletariat.

In the end, Cohen concludes that if “Marxist explanation of each proletarian generation’s lack of means of production we arrive at an original loss of natural resources as the ultimate cause of the exploitability of today’s proletariat” there is a serious fundamental disagreement “between the extreme importance imputed to the distribution of worldly resources in the Marxist diagnosis of the root cause of exploitation, and the total unimportance of worldly resources in the Marxist account of the source of value,” which treats labor as “the only source of value ... something like a labor theory of value is made to serve by John Locke” (Cohen, 1995, p. 169). Then, Cohen says that Marxists should “sustain their egalitarianism” because “currently existing inequality descends from people’s exercise of their self-owned powers and subsequent disposal of what they created by using them” (Cohen, 1995, p. 176). He recommends that Marxists “must distinguish their position from a *Locke-like* one which asserts both the preeminent place of labor in value creation and the laborer’s right to his labor and hence to its products” (Cohen, 1995, p. 170). He declares that if Marxists want to resolve this dilemma the first thing they need to do is to “reduce significance of labor in the account of value creation ... [which] means giving up the labor theory of value ... the other... way is to deny the labor’s claim to his product ... deny the principle of self-ownership” (Cohen, 1995, p. 170).

Next, it is worth discussing Cohen’s ideas about equality, justice, and Marx’s vision of future society. Cohen believes that even though the “principle governing

distribution under communism”¹¹ contradicts the notion of self-ownership, the principle, at the same time, supports it because of its sovereignty aspect over persons. Hence, in his view, Marxists are again inconsistent in their arguments (Cohen, 1995, pp. 158-9). Cohen explains the origin of the inconsistency by conjuring up an imaginary play, a puppet show, which goes as follows:

The communism objection: The communist principle contradicts the thesis of self-ownership, which therefore cannot be attributed to Marxists.

Cohen’s first answer: If the communist principle contradicts the self-ownership thesis, then perhaps Marxists contradict themselves.

Objector’s reply: They do not contradict themselves, since they invoke self-ownership only in an ‘ad hominem’ way.

Cohen’s first rejoinder: They nevertheless ceaselessly employ it, and that might be enough to explain their vulnerability to libertarianism.

Cohen’s second rejoinder: The ‘ad hominem’ gambit does not work.

Cohen’s third rejoinder: Merely ad hominem use of the self-ownership thesis would not explain the passion which accompanies the Marxist claim that the worker is robbed.

Cohen’s second answer to the communism objection: The communist principle does not, in fact, contradict the self-ownership thesis (Cohen, 1995, p. 158).

Also, Cohen believes that Marxists have traditionally shown little interest in equality because they believe in the inevitability of abundance. He claims that the precept, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” relies on a conviction that industrial development will bring society to a condition of abundance that will make it possible to meet what everyone needs (Cohen, 1995, p. 10).¹² And he concludes that he cannot maintain “Marx’s extravagant, pregreen, materialist optimism”

¹¹ He refers to, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”

¹² Similarly, Allen Wood asserts that the principle is not an egalitarian slogan. For Wood, the principle “does not treat people equally from any point of view” (Wood, 1986, p. 221).

(Cohen, 1995, p. 10). Cohen asserts that the *materialist optimism* of the future abundance is not an acceptable conceptualization for equality and justice. He calls this conceptualization *Marxist technological fix* and argues that this consideration has served as a means of avoiding the question of justice, which cannot be neglected.

Additionally, Cohen contends that Marx's lower phase of communism preserves the principle of self-ownership and the socialist proportionality principle condones inequality: "the more talented will ... do better than less talented" (Cohen, 1995, p. 124). Cohen claims that waiting for centuries for the Marxist technological fix to supplant liber(al)tarian principle of self-ownership, and overcome inequality it is not "realistic to think about the material situation of humanity" and not acceptable for an egalitarian position of justice (Cohen, 1995, pp. 124-7).¹³

Finally, Cohen recommends that Marxists should become more straightforwardly egalitarian in their theory by rethinking their concept and normative ethics in order to be consistent. For him, the principal concern should be defending a thoroughgoing egalitarian distribution of income and eliminating the stated inconsistency. Also, according to Cohen, contemporary Marxists should follow John Bordley Rawls (1921-2002)¹⁴ and Ronald Myles Dworkin (1931-...)¹⁵ who reject the libertarian premises of self-ownership and see individuals' abilities as largely the result of good fortune, rather than something for which they are fully responsible. For Cohen, this is the best hope for supporting an egalitarian outlook, and this is the consistent way of criticizing capitalism

¹³ Cohen writes, "Marx had to believe either that capitalism would last forever or that such a development of the productive forces would one day come. And, since he [Marx] hated capitalism, he needed his technological fix" (Cohen, 1995, p. 132).

¹⁴ John B. Rawls was an American philosopher in moral and political philosophy and is the author of the famous, *A Theory of Justice*.

¹⁵ Ronald M. Dworkin is a professor of law and philosophy at New York University.

(Cohen, 1995, pp. 160-1). Cohen says that rejecting the principle of self-ownership does not mean that no self-ownership rights are affirmed at all. Rejecting the principle of self-ownership is consistent with affirming many self-ownership rights that do not contradict equality and autonomy (Cohen, 1995, p. 119).¹⁶ Cohen thinks that the only way to block exploitation is to constrain individuals in the exercise of their talent and labor, which, in his view, is morally permissible to reach an egalitarian society. In order to support his arguments, Cohen gives an example involving a hypothetical situation of a two-people world,¹⁷ which is a model of abstractly pictured individuals with given interests, wants, purposes, needs etc., that show that equality can only be reached at the expense human autonomy.

Concluding Remarks

Cohen is right when he says that Locke's labor mixture is a "premise to justify the original formation of private property" (Cohen, 1995, p. 176). However, some clarification is needed to question the relationship between Marx and Locke or a *Locke-like* conception by showing how Marx approaches them. It is unquestionable that John Locke had a profound effect on the development of economic thought and the founders of classical economics.¹⁸ It is also clear in Marx writings that he was aware of Locke's significant place in the development of the liberal political economy. Hence, Marx recognizes Locke as the prophet of capitalist appropriation and private property who laid the theoretical foundation of bourgeois political economy: "Locke's view is all the more

¹⁶ The grounds of this claim are explored in Chapter III in which Robert Nozick's libertarian philosophy and Cohen's critique of self-ownership are discussed.

¹⁷ Chapter III discusses Cohen's hypothetical model in detail.

¹⁸ Evald Ilyenkov's book *Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx's Capital* (1982) is a good source to see how Locke's ideas shaped the writings of the first theoreticians of political economy such as William Petty, Adam Smith, and David Ricardo, and so on so forth.

important because it was the classical expression of bourgeois society's ideas of rights as against feudal society, and moreover his philosophy served as the basis for all the ideas of the whole of subsequent English political economy" (Marx, 1969, p. 367). What Marx is trying to show in the lines above is the importance of Locke's theory in a bourgeois political economy. This does not necessarily mean that a Locke-like view has an impact on Marx's value theory. On the contrary, it will become clear that Locke's labor mixture pales in comparison with that of Marx and one would emphatically deny such an ascription to his works when Marx's analysis of capitalism is argued.

Also, contrary to Cohen's discussion, the importance of *worldly resources*, as a constituent element in human practice, is obvious in a number of the lines in Marx' writings. For example, when Marx takes notes to the The Programme of the German Worker's Party in the *Critique of Gotha Program*, his first comment on the first article of the programme, "Labor is the source of all wealth and all culture," not only presents a critique of the fetish character of the leftist social democrat perception of labor, but also introduces the historical relationship between labor and nature. In Marx's own words, "Labor is not the source of all wealth. Nature is just as much the source of use values ... as labor, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labor power" (Marx, 1936, pp. 554-5). The perception of production by isolated labor or nature is an inherently illogical and ahistorical account. According to Marx, man and nature compose an essential unity. In Marx's own words, "the worker can create nothing without nature" (Marx, 1986, p. 109).¹⁹ On the other hand, "nature ... taken abstractly, for itself, and

¹⁹ One of the most important aspects of the relationship between man and nature, which is considered by Marx as a part of the labor's fourfold alienation under capitalism, is labor's estrangement from nature. Since the product of labor has been expropriated, and commodified nature has been commodified and

fixed in its separation from man, is nothing for man” (Marx, 1986, p. 191). And nature as a use value is realized only through the transformative power of labor. The labor represented in this transformation, in the commodity is the *abstract labor* that creates *value* as a social category and alienated form.²⁰ Therefore, Cohen’s claim can be interpreted as an unfortunate misunderstanding of the differences between the *exchange value* and *use value*, and *abstract labor* and *concrete labor*, and *value*, *market price*, and *equilibrium price*.

The claim, which is based on the importance of *the land endowment of the whole planet*, can be correctly concluded by referring to the chapter, *The Secret of Primitive Accumulation* in Marx’s *Capital* (1972a) to show historical origins of the creation and appropriation of surplus value as a source of primitive accumulation and capital accumulation. The chapter begins with a summary of the Chapters One through Twenty five of *Capital* (1972a): “We have seen how money is changed into capital; how through capital surplus value is made, and from surplus value more capital.” Marx continues, “... the accumulation of capital presupposes surplus value; surplus value presupposes capitalistic production; capitalistic production presupposes the preexistence of considerable masses of capital and labor power in the hands of producers of commodities,” who are the owners of money and means of production, and the seller of their own *labor power* (Marx, 1972a, p. 713) So, capitalist production also presupposes the separation of the workers from the means of production and the concentration of the

reduced to a mere means of subsistence. See Marx: *Estranged Labor* and Polanyi: *Market and Man* and *Market and Nature* for a detailed analysis (Marx, 1986, pp. 106-19; Polanyi, 2001, pp. 171-200).

²⁰ Put another way, *concrete labor* is reduced to *abstract labor* through the market and thus, has a social character. “Abstract labor (that has been rendered social through the sale and purchase of commodity” is the “substance or essence of value” (Hunt, 2002, p. 226). This is why, when Marx talks about the relationship between *labor* and *value* he always uses *abstract labor*. It is the *abstract labor* that creates social relations that are attached to things.

means of production in the hands of a few, the capitalists. Free workers are not part of the means of production themselves; hence, they are distinguished from serfs.

Therefore, there is a complete separation of the workers from the means of production for the realization of the labor. Marx explains that the *preceding capitalistic accumulation*, the original sin that is responsible for the poverty of the great majority, and for the sanctity of private property, has originated in “conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, [which] play the great part” (Marx, 1972a, p. 714). That is why the actual history is notorious. And Marx writes, “from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labor, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work” (Marx, 1972a, p. 713). Then, Marx concludes, “The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production” (Marx, 1972a, 714). This separation between labor and means of production is a continuous and inherent process of capitalist production. It will be seen in detail in the section on the critique of Robert Nozick in Chapter III that “the original loss of natural resources,” or the origin of primitive accumulation means nothing else than the separation of producers from the means of production. And it is argued that it is this separation that created historical and current sui generis conditions of the production and extraction of *surplus value* as the fundamental underpinning of Marx’s commodified alienated labor under capitalism; hence, the future society demands to abolish this separation.

It is discussed in some detail in Chapter IV but it is worth noting that, for Marx, because of this separation within private property, man has been commodified, separated

from its *bearer*, human being, and become a thing; a *thing* that has been estranged from the nature, product of his labor, from his *species being*, and from himself (Marx, 1986, pp. 112-4). It is palpable after this separation that slavery, barbarism, battle, murder, robbery, theft, cruelty, savagery, poverty, hunger, racism, discrimination, sexism, violation of human rights, the suppression of national self-determination, oppression, the exploitation of the Third World, in brief, all types of inequalities, which are inherent in private property regime, have been taking place in every aspect of life. If Marx fell under the historically wide diversity of inequality's spell, his concept would stand below *class antagonisms* and below *any recollection of them*, and at the end, all his analysis would arrive at the original sin just as in theology do the others: "Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race" (Marx, 1972a, p. 713).

It is argued that Marx's analysis of capitalist production and appropriation of surplus value are based on two premises that are the content of the labor theory of value: firstly, Marx states that there is a difference between labor and labor power; secondly, he shows that the surplus value that labor creates is the source of profit. The purpose of the LTV is to uncover the social relation between capitalist and worker. Marx's main purpose is to reveal the social relations between capital and labor. Therefore, to reject the labor theory of value means to reduce "the critique of capitalism to a matter of one's feelings about the fairness or unfairness of the initial endowments of assets" (Hunt, 1992, p. 103). Unsurprisingly, in *Why not Socialism*, his last book, Cohen reduces the desirability of socialism to the rational choice theory, an ethical choice of the alienated individual, even though it is not a feasible system for him. In the book, Cohen's argument for future society becomes purely ethical: socialism should be instituted because this is a morally

desirable alternative required by justice, and a better system than capitalism even though it is impossible to establish it.²¹ However, also, due to the selfish, self-interested behavior of the individual, which capitalism depends on, the inability of the alienated individual to change society contradicts the desirability of the future society in Cohen's *Why not Socialism*. It is questionable how something that is impossible can be desirable.

Therefore, this study takes the view that the LTV and Marx's analysis of the nature of the labor process under capitalism are the necessary foundations of his critique of the damage to human beings, and human autonomy and human development in capitalist society. Marx's conceptualization of value is an expression of the sociality of labor, which the capitalist mode of production impairs and distorts (Hunt, 1992, p. 104).

Also, another interpretation of Marx's writings on exploitation, especially *Capital* (1972a), emphasizes that it is a technical process that satisfies capital's ceaseless, unending drive to accumulate capital. The particular social relations of capitalism give control of all labor process to capital and capitalists (Hunt, 1992, p. 94). An interpretation of Marx's views, which ignores the social relations of capitalism, is hardly consistent with Marx's *Capital*. Therefore, Cohen's notion of exploitation has no connection to

²¹ In the book Cohen imagines a camping trip among friends and relatives. Everything is shared freely; each person contributes according to his ability and obeys the rules of equality and community. After a while, campers begin to act selfishly, and demand more according to their talents and contributions. For example, one demands extra food because he is good at fishing, another one demands more payment when she finds a huge apple tree, "full of perfect apples," another one demands more payment too, because she realizes that she is more talented than the others, another one recognizes that he has a special information about the campsite and wants to have better food than the others. At the end, all these selfish motives and interests are suppressed by the soul of the camping community. The campers realize that it is obvious, right away to organize a camping trip on socialist principles. Cohen concludes that socialism is morally a desirable system (Cohen, 2009, pp. 5-11). Then Cohen asks, why can't society as a whole be ordered the same way? The rest of his argument concludes that socialism is desirable but not feasible for society as a whole because first, Cohen, a postmodern thinker, says that, it requires a better moral character (capitalism has deepened selfish and egocentric interests), and second "... we now know that we do not now know how to do that" since in large scale societies it impossible to make good calculations without market prices (Cohen, 2009, pp. 53-81). In sum, it will be seen that this technocratic social engineering in a hypothetical scenario is a far cry from Marxism.

capitalist relations of production. The gist of Cohen's account of Marx's views on exploitation is based essentially on a kind of positivist epistemology and logical positivism.

Up to this point Cohen's claim that the libertarian concept of self-ownership is unavoidable in the Marxist account of exploitation has been discussed. It has been seen that, according to Cohen as one who made his primary commitment to equality, capitalism is an unjust socioeconomic system because it deprives people of their rightful share of world resources and frustrates the satisfaction of fundamental human needs. Therefore, capitalism should be discussed on the ground of social injustice, and a moral critique should be the central element in contemporary Marxist theory. The next chapter explores Robert Nozick's libertarian philosophy and his theory of justice and analyzes Cohen's claim that self-ownership is the most fundamental argument in favor of libertarianism. It also explores those aspects of Nozick's theory of justice that Cohen's critique of libertarianism does not address.

CHAPTER III

ROBERT NOZICK'S LIBERTARIAN PHILOSOPHY, CAPITALISM, AND JUSTICE, AND G. A. COHEN'S CRITIQUE OF NOZICK: INCOMPATIBILITY OF SELF-OWNERSHIP WITH EQUALITY AND AUTONOMY

Introduction

Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (ASU) was awarded the National Book Award in 1975 and is widely acclaimed as one of the most important contributions to political philosophy on freedom and justice in the twentieth century (Bader, 2010, p. 4).²² For example, B.H. Fried points out that Nozick's ASU is not "only the central text for all contemporary academic discussions of libertarianism; together with John Rawls' (1921-2002) *A Theory of Justice* (1971), it also arguably framed the landscape of academic political philosophy in the last decades of the twentieth century" (Fried, 2005, p. 221). Similarly, D. Schmidtz observes "The agenda for current philosophical work on justice was set in the 1970s by John Rawls and Robert Nozick" (Schmidtz, 2005, p. 148). More importantly, Nozick's writings are also very much influential in academic debates

²² Anyone who wishes to gain an adequate understanding of Nozick's ideas should begin by investigating the following questions: Why *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, in the U.S.A in the early 1970s? The answer would be historically reflexive. This reflexivity addresses the revival of liber(al)tarian diaspora and conservative ideas, which enjoyed an enormous resurgence during the second half of the twentieth century. Jonathan Wolff correctly observes that: "Nozick's views have many affinities with the defense of laissez faire capitalism which has been part of the *ruling ideology* of the 1980s" (Wolff, 1991, p. viii). The publication of ASU reflects the growing conservatism in political thought of the mid-1970s (Sen, 1996, p. 481).

on distributive justice (see Narveson, 1998; Hasnas, 2003, 2005; Van Parijs, 1995; Vallentyne, Steiner & Otsuka, 2005; Dworkin, 2003; and Cohen, 1995).

In his *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas*, Friedrich August Hayek (1899-1992) regards libertarians as “true liberals” (Hayek, 1978, p. 298). An explanation of why libertarians became true liberals can be found in the lines of Jeffrey Friedman (1997). He says that the studies of Chicago and Austrian school economists could not explain why government intervention in the economy would do more harm than good and their debates with the socialist economists of the 1920s were not beneficial and sufficient for the idea of a free market economy. Friedman thus notes, “Nozick became a libertarian after being convinced that [Ludwig von] Mises-Hayek critique of socialism was lethal” (Friedman, 1997, p. 450).²³ Given that many premises of liber(al)tarian arguments are explicitly derived from *ASU* it is no accident that current libertarian arguments of justice are founded upon the Nozickian premises of self-ownership.

Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Robert Nozick’s masterpiece, is primarily a classic example of a classical liberal critique of the *welfare state* for what he calls the violation of human liberty as it restricts free market economy, and pure capitalism, which is deified as a symbol of human freedom in his theory. Nozick’s critique, a far cry from the classic *efficiency discussions* of liberal theory, rests on his theory of justice which is premised on

²³ Robert Nozick was born in 1938 in Brooklyn, a son of a Russian Jewish immigrant family. He became interested in philosophy as an undergraduate at Columbia and completed his PhD in 1963 at Princeton with the dissertation, *The Normative Theory of Individual Choice*. Before attending Princeton Nozick was a committed socialist and he had joined Norman Thomas’ Socialist Party (Bader, 2010, pp. 1-3). However, at Princeton, he dispensed with his self evident, superior socialist ideas, and was then mesmerized by emerging free market fundamentalism and bewitching illusions of capitalism; he started to become a fierce, influential-leader, and life-long committed liber(al)tarian. Nozick acquired fame through the publication of his book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* in 1974 when he was a professor at Harvard. In this book, Nozick peaks his libertarian political and moral theory by defending an extreme form of individualism based on self-ownership to justify a private property regime for a theory of justice.

the principle of self-ownership, which claims that an individual possesses ownership over himself, and because of this he is inviolable. For Nozick, if one owns himself, then he owns whatever he produces (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 105). According to Nozick, self-ownership is based on the assertion that, “Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights)” (Nozick, 1974, p. ix). The very idea of these rights constitutes the basis of Nozick’s theory and property. Hence, Nozick sees the defense of private property as essential to a free life under capitalism.

For Nozick, only a “minimal state, limited to the narrow functions of protection against force, theft, fraud, enforcement of contracts, and so on, is justified” because “any more extensive state will violate person’s rights not to be forced to do certain things” (Nozick, 1974, p. ix). In other words, the *minimal state* is basically the *night watchman state* of classical liberalism whose functions are the same as stated above. Nozick’s theory does not defend private property on utilitarian grounds. He believes that the free market economy brings better goods at lower prices, and thus, more prosperity to more people by increasing economic efficiency, etc. But these are not the reasons why he defends the right to property and free market economy. Nozick defends the right to private property on moral grounds. His libertarianism holds that the right to private property is an absolute fundamental right.

Since Nozick thinks his moral principles are borrowed from Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and John Locke (1632-1704), this chapter focuses on his theory of justice with special references to Kantian principle, Lockean proviso, and his *Entitlement Theory of Justice* (ENTOJ), which tries to justify private ownership. For the remainder of this

chapter, Cohen's response to the foundations of libertarianism and the implications of Nozick's theory are explored and the principles that make up the foundation of the Nozickian theory of property are examined. In addition, since Cohen's account does not address the origins of Nozick's theory, the rest of the section focuses on these aspects of Nozick's philosophy Cohen does not discuss.

Nozick's Libertarian Philosophy, Capitalism, and Justice

Nozick's Theory of Rights

The heart of Nozick's theory as stated in the first sentence of *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, holds that "individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating these rights)" (Nozick, 1974, p. ix). Nozick's concept of absolute individual rights is founded upon the principle of self-ownership and moral inviolability of individuals. Self-ownership is the free exercise of one's uniqueness. In *ASU*, Nozick introduces the principle of self-ownership as the first premise of his view of morality: "The principle says that every person is morally entitled to full private property in his own person and powers. This means that each person has an extensive set of moral rights ... over the use and fruits of his body and capacities" (Cohen & Graham, 1990, p. 25). For Nozick, all individuals enjoy full and exclusive rights of control and use over themselves and their powers. Therefore, these *self-owners* owe no service or products to anyone else that they have not contracted to supply. Each person is owned by himself and so must be free as he pleases, as long as it does not harm anyone else (Otsuka, 2003, pp. 12-3).

According to Nozick, these absolute individual rights should command the greatest respect by society because they "reflect the underlying Kantian principle that

individuals are ends and not merely means; they may not be sacrificed or used for the achieving of other ends without their consent” (Nozick, 1974, pp. 30-1). This *Kantian principle* is based on a theory of rights, treats persons as “distinct individuals who are not resources for others” (Nozick, 1974, p. 33). In Nozick’s opinion, a liberal society treats individuals, not as “instrument or resources,” but as “persons having individual rights with the dignity this constitutes” (Nozick, 1974, p. 334). For Nozick, the most important rights are rights over oneself, the rights that constitute self-ownership. The term *self* in self-ownership signifies that what owns, and what is owned, are one and the same, namely, the whole person (Cohen, 1986, p. 110). To put it another way, if a person owns himself, then he owns whatever he produces (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 105).

Nozick argues that the morality of a “meaningful life” is derived from the natural right to self-ownership. In his analysis of a “meaningful life,” Nozick not only takes the right to self-ownership as a natural right, but also links it with the right of private appropriation. This concept shows that Nozick’s theory of rights is derived from Locke. In the Lockean account, the use of the earth to the best advantage of people’s life is what links the natural right to self-ownership with the right to private appropriation. In Nozick’s theory, only private appropriation fulfils the concept of a meaningful life (Papaioannou, 2010, pp. 22-3). The importance of the right to property is such that Nozick clearly and unambiguously states the superiority of the right to private property over all other rights, even the right to life. He writes, “one first needs a theory of property rights before one can apply any supposed right to life. ... the right to life cannot provide the foundation for a theory of property rights” (Nozick, 1974, p. 179). This acknowledgement calls the right to private property the most important right.

In Nozick's theory, men have the right to live separate lives because they are "capable of choosing autonomously among alternatives" (Nozick, 1974, p. 48). Nozick thinks that there is no need for unreasonable worry, and God should not tell humankind what to do with their rights. According to Nozick, a person may choose to do anything himself, or have another do it for him, which "may be impossible for him to do himself" (Nozick, 1974, p. 58). This capability is founded on three characteristics: "rationality, free will, and moral agency" (Nozick, 1974, p. 48). Nozick believes that it is these characteristics of which each self consists. And he thus believes that self-ownership is a right that people can legitimately claim. He says that a *laborer*, who lacks any property, and must sell his labor power to the capitalist, has the right to self-ownership (Nozick, 1974, pp. 262-4). He has the right to self-ownership even though Nozick concedes he may be forced to agree to whatever terms the capitalist is offering him in order to survive, which can be the equivalent to slavery in ancient Rome. The sovereignty over owning vastly unequal amounts of wealth cannot be questioned because they are the inevitable and natural result of the properly exercised principle of self-ownership. Hence, any attempt to reduce inequality at the expense of private property is an unacceptable violation of justice. If this right is violated by removing someone's private property the result is like removing his arm (Nozick, 1974, p. 206).

The central claim in Nozick's theory is that everyone is entitled to the goods they currently possess, and a just distribution is simply whatever distribution results from people's free exchanges. Any distribution that arises through free transfers from a just situation is itself just. For the government to coercively tax these exchanges against anyone's will is unjust, even if the taxes are used to support those who are unable to

work. The only legitimate taxation is to raise revenues for maintaining the background institutions needed to protect the system of free exchange (Nozick, 1974, p. 151). Therefore, Nozick thinks that only unrestricted private property rights, freewheeling capitalism can fully recognize the right to self-ownership (Nozick, 1974, p. 186).

Nozick's argument can be summarized in two claims: a) only unrestricted capitalism recognizes self-ownership and thus, any intervention in market exchange is incompatible with it, and b) equality rests on recognizing individuals as self-owners. The following section elaborates on Nozick's theory of the state to clarify why he maintains that a free market economy is indispensable for a just society, one that recognizes man's absolute individual rights.

Nozick's Theory of Minimal State for Justice

Nozick proposes a moral justification of the minimal state in terms of abstract principles of libertarianism, arguing for a free market and unrestricted private property rights. The central claim in Nozick's libertarianism is that redistributive taxation is inherently unjust; it is a violation of people's rights, so an obstruction of justice. Nozick thinks that the spontaneous and evolutionary process of free market exchange can grant libertarian values. People have a right to freely dispose of their goods and services, whether or not it is the best way to ensure productivity.

Put another way, government has no right to interfere in the market. As Nozick puts it, "a minimal state, limited to the narrow functions of protection against force, theft, fraud, enforcement of contracts, and so on, is justified; any more extensive state will violate persons' rights not to be forced to do certain things, and is unjustified" (Nozick, 1974, p. ix). Since people have a right to dispose of their holdings as they see fit, any

interference is a violation, not of efficiency, but of their *suigeneris* moral rights for justice, the right to self-ownership. Hence, there is no argument for public education, public health care, transportation, roads, or parks. All of these involve the coercive taxation of some people against their will, violating the principle of “from each as they choose, to each as they are chosen” (Nozick, 1974, p. 160). In general, in Nozick’s view, a distributive state violates the rights of all individuals to equal freedom of choice (Nozick, 1974, pp. 149-50). In particular, in this view, the state violates individuals’ right to property if it attempts to transfer property from the rich to the poor. Distribution is to be left to the unimpeded free market, gifts, and voluntary charitable donations (Nozick, 1974, p. 164).

Therefore, according to Nozick, taxation involves taking the product of one’s labor. Taking the income of n hours of work from a person amounts to taking n hours from that person. It is like forcing the person to work n hours for a purpose he has not chosen. To give persons an enforceable claim on the product of the labor of other persons amounts to giving persons partial ownership in other persons. This contravenes the principle of self-ownership; it violates the right to self-ownership because it gives persons a claim on the labor of other persons (Nozick, 1974, p. 172). By extension, redistribution *per se* violates the rights of individuals. Taxation, a form of redistribution, involves taking from some what they are entitled to and giving it to others. Nozick denounces it as on par with forced labor. For Nozick, talk of redistributing the wealth means talk of redistributing the body parts of persons (Nozick, 1974, p. 206).

Some argue that libertarianism is not a theory of equality or mutual advantage. Rather, as the name suggests, it is a theory of liberty that is used to defend capitalism: an

unrestricted market economy involves more freedom; freedom is the fundamental value and, therefore, the free self-regulated market economy is morally required. That is why Nozick believes that the market respects individual freedom (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 138).

Since Nozick thinks *laissez faire capitalism* is the most just society because the buyers and sellers are the freest in free exchange, he rejects socialism without giving any definition of it. He argues that any attempt of redistribution of wealth in society can be maintained only at the price of tyranny and injustice. Nozick assumes that freedom will inevitably be upset under socialism as soon as the socialist state intervenes in economic life even if private property over means of production is respected (Nozick, 1974, p. 163). Put in Nozick's words: "The socialist society would have to forbid capitalist acts between consenting adults" (Nozick, 1974, p. 163).

Also, Nozick, in his judgment of the socialist state and Marxism, criticizes Marx's concept of exploitation. Even though he never explains why he argues that with the collapse of the labor theory of value, the Marxist theory of exploitation collapses too,²⁴ he writes, "the charm and simplicity of this theory's definition of exploitation is lost when it is realized that according to the definition there will be exploitation in any society in which investments take place for a greater future (perhaps because of population growth); and in any society in which those unable to work, or to work productively, are subsidized by the labor of others" (Nozick, 1974, p. 253).

²⁴ It is worth noting that Nozick's critique of the Marxist concept of exploitation is similar to Cohen's account.

The Nozickian Proviso²⁵

Nozick remarks that his moral assumptions are borrowed from Locke and Kant.

Locke writes in the *Treatise of Civil Government*:

Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person; this nobody has any right to but himself. The labor of his body and the work of his hands we may say are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labor with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property ... that excludes the common right of other men: for this labor being the unquestionable property of the laborer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good, left in common for others. (Locke, 1937, p. 18)

Locke suggests that one can acquire property rights over their products by mixing their labor with resources if one leaves “enough and as good” for others. In addition, Locke insists that there should be no waste; no one has a right to appropriate more than he can use before it spoils; “the world is a common stock from which we are at liberty to draw the means of our self-preservation” (Kelly, 2007, p. 68).

While Locke’s proviso means that there be “enough and as good left in common for others,” in Nozick’s view this is meant to ensure that others are not made worse off by the appropriation in question (Nozick, 1974, p. 176).²⁶ In this way, the unowned resources come to be appropriated by *self-owning* individuals. Nozick argues that those who are unable to appropriate are not made worse off by a private property regime that allows appropriation and permanent ownership, but, rather, in many cases, actually made better off. Nozick thinks that Locke provides the proper definition of legitimate appropriation: one that does not worsen anyone’s overall condition. Nozick calls this the

²⁵ Nozick’s interpretation of Locke’s view is called Nozickian Proviso (Papaioannu, 2010).

²⁶ Nozick criticizes Locke’s labor mixture notion and writes of “... why isn’t mixing what I own with what I don’t own a way of losing what I own rather than a way of gaining what I don’t? If I own a can of tomato juice and spill it in the sea so that its molecules (made radioactive, so I can check this) mingle evenly throughout the sea, do I thereby come to own the sea ...” (Nozick, 1974, pp. 174-5).

Lockean Proviso, and adopts it as his test of legitimate acquisition: “a process morally giving rise to a permanent bequeathable property right in a previously unowned thing will not do so if the position of others no longer at liberty to use the things is thereby worsened” (Nozick, 1974, p. 178).²⁷ Also, Nozick believes that “the free operation of a market system will not actually run afoul of the Lockean proviso” (Nozick, 1974, p. 182). In Nozick’s opinion, appropriation and exchange always result in compensating benefits so that: “private property satisfies the intent behind the ‘enough and as good left over’ proviso” (Nozick, 1974, p. 177).

For Nozick, the ideas of Locke are compatible with the Kantian principle that “individuals are ends and not merely means, they are not to be sacrificed or used for the achieving of other’s ends without their consent. Individuals are inviolable” (Nozick, 1974, p. 31). These principles are the foundation of Nozick’s theory of justice and his defense of the right to private property. More specifically, Nozick places these principles with the Lockean proviso at the heart of his *Entitlement Theory of Justice*, which is explained in the following section.

Nozick’s *Entitlement Theory of Justice*

Nozick refers to his theory of property rights as the *Entitlement Theory of Justice* in holdings. The *Entitlement Theory of Justice* (ENTOJ) backs up the argument of the minimal state and the belief in the free market. The *ENTOJ* has three aspects: a) the

²⁷ Nozick adds that if appropriation fails to do so, it must compensate others. However, his argument of compensation is not clear at all. To compensate someone is not to give him what he would have had, given the opportunity to appropriate the thing in question, but only to give him what he would have had, had he had the opportunity to use the thing in question. It means, for the principle, the community owes nothing to whoever is unable to work because they “deserved to be punished, and deserved to have a lower share” (Nozick, 1974, pp. 154, 178). In order to justify his concept he arbitrarily narrows the base line and says, “the crucial point is whether appropriation on an unowned object worsens the situation of others” (Nozick, 1974, p. 175).

“principle of justice in acquisition” that stipulates the justice of original acquisition or the appropriation of unheld things, b) the “principle of justice in transfer” that stipulates the transfer of holdings from one person to another, and c) “the principle of rectification of justice in holdings” intended to rectify violations of the first two principles (Nozick, 1974, pp. 151-2). According to *ENTOJ*, a distribution is just if it is the result of the just application of the first two principles. Nozick contends that his theory differs from other theories of distributive justice because it is historical. He writes:

I do not know of a thorough or theoretically sophisticated treatment of such issues. ... [However] this principle uses historical information about previous situations and injustices done in them, and information about the actual course of events that flowed from these injustices, until the present, and it yields a description of holdings in the society. (Nozick, 1974, p. 152)

In Nozick’s theory, the principle of justice in transfers assumes that the earlier owner had a legitimate title. The validity of property rights depends on the validity of the previous property rights. Then, determining the validity of current property rights requires going back down the chain of transfers to the beginning (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 111).

Nozick says that the principle of original acquisition is concerned with the appropriation of unheld things, while the principle of justice in transfer is concerned with the process through which justly held things can be transferred to other persons. These two principles assume that persons are self-owners. In Nozick’s theory, each individual is justified in appropriating the world resources and transferring them in a way he chooses so long as his choice does not worsen the situation of others. The application of the principle of rectification presupposes that the minimal state has already emerged as an institution, and has the monopoly of knowledge about past injustices that guarantees the

first two principles of entitlement justice. Nozick briefly summarizes his *ENTOJ*: “Whatever arises from a just situation by just steps is itself just” (Nozick, 1974, p. 151).

The remainder of this chapter examines the implications of the key components of Nozick’s theory of justice and freedom by questioning their consequences and logical conclusions. It first addresses Cohen’s claim that Nozick self-ownership and his moral commitment to equality and autonomy are inconsistent, and then focuses on a further critique of libertarianism by questioning the origins and the foundations of Nozick’s theory of justice.

A Critique of Robert Nozick’s Libertarian Philosophy of Justice

Introduction

G. A. Cohen, in *Self-ownership, Freedom and Equality*, responds to Robert Nozick’s libertarianism, but does so by adopting Nozick’s idea of self-ownership.²⁸ Cohen is attracted to the libertarian idea of self-ownership and attempts to find a way in which it can be reconciled with his moral commitments to equality and autonomy, which, he holds, underpin a just society. The following section discusses Cohen’s effort to reconcile these principles. Cohen’s account, however, does not question the abstract individualism Nozick uses to justify private property, its origins, and the emergence of free market economy, and thus, does not go far enough. Expanding on what is left out in Cohen’s critique, the chapter ends with a broader critique of Nozick’s philosophy.

²⁸ Cohen’s book is treated as the most devastating critique of Nozick’s libertarianism (Liorente, 1998, p. 109).

A Critique of Nozick's Theory of Justice by Cohen: Incompatibility of Self-ownership with Equality and Autonomy

Cohen focuses his criticism on two aspects of distributive justice: a person's relationship to himself and his relationship to material resources that is usually framed in terms of what rights people have (Cohen, 1995, p. 71). Rights describe the powers people have in relation to themselves and others. Hence, Cohen examines what rights people should have over themselves and over material resources.

On what rights people have over themselves, Nozick claims that a person should have liberty to act according to one's free will. Nozick argues that the way to ensure liberty is to consider people as self-owners (Cohen, 1995, p. 71). However, Cohen points out that Nozick gives no independent argument that freedom is the ultimate primary value from which self-ownership is derived. Cohen argues, "Nozick's real view is that the scope and nature of the freedom that we should enjoy is a function of our self-ownership" (Cohen, 1995, p. 67). This means that, according to Nozick, a person is free if he is a self-owner. Therefore, Cohen claims "The primary commitment of ... [Nozick's] philosophy is not to liberty but to the thesis of self-ownership" (Cohen, 1995, p. 67).

In other words, Nozick's primary moral commitment is to self-ownership and only secondarily, to liberty, because libertarianism affirms not freedom as such, but freedom of a certain type whose shape is delineated by the thesis of self-ownership.²⁹

²⁹ Cohen says that he realized that Nozick is primarily committed to self-ownership. He discovered an oddity in the views of libertarianism, liberalism and Marxism. Although both liberals and Marxists do not formulate their theories in term of self-ownership, Cohen does so to compare what rights each theory grants people to themselves. Cohen interprets each theory with respect to self-ownership in the following way: Libertarians advocate that people are self-owners. Liberals, who are to the left of libertarians on the political spectrum, seem to believe that people are not self-owners although they do not frame the issue in this way. Marxists, who are considered even further to the left than liberals are, implicitly affirming self-

Nozick says that individuals are free to use their powers as they wish. But this self-ownership is not derived from any principle of liberty. As Cohen indicates, Nozick does not define any independent form of freedom from which self-ownership is derived (Cohen, 1995, p. 67). Nozick thinks that freedom comes first, but in order to be free, individuals need self-ownership; hence, a lack of self-ownership means a lack of freedom. Nozick's theory, in reality, treats *freedom* as a function of self-ownership. He does not take into consideration the apparent coercively created and coercively maintained state of dependence of workers, who have to sell their labor power in order to survive, because they are self-owners, which means they are *free* in a liber(al)tarian moral sense.

Cohen shows that Nozick's argument for allowing unequal distribution of rights over material resources rests on his contention that self-ownership justifies inequality (Cohen, 1995, pp. 70-4). After showing that self-ownership does not legitimate inequality, Cohen tries to find a way of distributing rights over material resources in a way that will protect people's self-ownership and achieve his moral commitments to equality and autonomy (Cohen, 1995, pp. 92-3). Cohen, whose principal concern is to defend a thoroughgoing egalitarian distribution of income (Palmer, 1998, p. 227), argues

ownership in their critique of libertarianism (Cohen, 1995, pp. 117-8). For Cohen, the oddity is that both libertarians and Marxists affirm self-ownership while simultaneously condemning the other's theory for violating self-ownership. Both libertarians and Marxists criticize the transfer of wealth from one person to another. Libertarianism criticizes Marxism because of the wealth transfer from the rich to the poor through redistributive taxation. They think that this violates the self-ownership of the rich because they are not reaping all the fruits of their labor and market transactions. Similarly, Marxists condemn libertarians because they allow the transfer of wealth from the workers to the capitalist through exploitation. They view this as violating self-ownership because the workers are not reaping all of the fruits of their labor. Since both condemn the transfer of wealth because it violates self-ownership, libertarian theory and Marxist theory seem closely tied (Cohen, 1995, pp. 118-9). Cohen's account is discussed in Chapter IV but it is worth to note that, in the lines of Cohen, Marx's concept of exploitation has mutated into a form of the critique of income redistribution and redistributive taxation.

that self-ownership and equality can be reconciled only by abrogating the autonomy of individuals (Cohen, 1995, p. 98).

Cohen notes that for libertarian self-ownership to mean anything substantive, it must have an underlying conception of the ownership status of the world's resources (Cohen, 1995, p. 71). This is the case because affirming libertarian self-ownership tells only what one can and cannot do with material resources once they are already the exclusive property of some as opposed to others. One can use such resources along with his own labor to produce things that he will also exclusively own. One cannot take resources by force or threat of force from people who have title to them. A title to resources indicates that the titleholder(s) legitimately and exclusively own(s) the resources. For Nozick, a person's title to resources is legitimate only if the title of the person from whom they received it was legitimate. Thus, to find out whether a title is legitimate it is necessary to trace it from past owner to past owner throughout history until arriving at the original owner. Nozick argues that if the original owner appropriated the resources justifiably and each subsequent transfer of the resources did not violate libertarian self-ownership, then the title is legitimate. If all current titles to resources are legitimate, the libertarian idea of self-ownership stipulates permissible from impermissible ways to exchange titles. However, it does not tell anything about how those titles were originally obtained (Nozick in Cohen, 1995, pp. 72-3). Since libertarian idea of self-ownership says nothing about acquiring titles to initial resources, the theory of original acquisition of titles does not follow from libertarian self-ownership. If the initial acquisition of titles to material resources is distributed unequally, their legitimate use in accordance with the libertarian principle of self-ownership simply perpetuates

inequality over time. Thus, self-ownership not only perpetuates but also ends up justifying inequality.

First, it is a fallacy to assume that all forms of property historically were private property, which ignores the transition from common ownership to private ownership, and that capitalist property rights are universal and natural. The following quotation from Marx lays bare the libertarian fallacy. He writes: “All production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society. In this sense it is tautology to say that property (appropriation) is a precondition of production. But it is altogether ridiculous to leap from that to a specific form of [private] property” (Marx, 1993, p. 87). During the *enclosures* in England (and in other places around the world), what was common property was made private individual property. Second, the people who were driven off the land were made worse off. They did not benefit in any shape or form, for instance by being given jobs, providing livelihoods as an outcome of the private appropriation of resources.³⁰ On the contrary, as Marx indicates, the enclosure had started off an era of human misery and proletarianization of landless peasants (Marx, 1972a, pp. 718-9). So even if one accepts Nozick’s definition of what is morally acceptable, one would then have to say that by his definition almost all appropriation of common resources has not been justified – leading to conclusions opposite to his.

Also, the Nozickian proviso does not appear to be acceptable to justify property rights.³¹ Cohen rightly claims that Nozick does not provide any arguments for taking the

³⁰ Dr. Al Campbell proffered this critique in one of our conversations.

³¹ The following quotation is vital to understand the absolute market mentality of today’s pharmaceutical industries, which is animated in Nozick’s lines: “A medical researcher who synthesizes a new substance that effectively treats a certain disease [let’s call it AIDS, or Influenza, or Bubonic Plague, or Malaria, or Ebola, or any one of the deadly disease] and who refuses to sell except on his terms does not worsen the situation of others by depriving them of whatever he has appropriated” (Nozick, 1974, p. 181) Because

situation in which the object remains unowned as the base line for assessing appropriation. Cohen suggests that different schemes of appropriation should be considered in terms of whether any person is made worse off by the actual appropriation relative to other schemes of appropriation (Cohen, 1995, p. 78). If person X appropriates resource R, whether Y is worse off as a result is not all that matters, because Y might be worse off in relation to other alternative outcomes blocked by X's appropriation of R. For instance, Y might have been better off had he appropriated R solely or jointly with X. A libertarian can be asked why the world's resources should not be jointly owned, such that each person has an equal veto over the disposal of the world resources (Exdell, 1977, pp. 146-9; Cohen, 1986b, pp. 80-7). Nozick never explains why the defacto baseline is sufficient or necessary in deeming any appropriation as just. The Nozickian proviso only tries to justify private property and private appropriation. However, by definition, it cannot justify both private property rights in appropriation.

Cohen addresses the problem by posing hypothetical situations to test whether the Nozickian proviso is consistent or not. Table 1 considers a simple model: a two-people world consisting of persons A and B in which there is, initially, Lockean common ownership of its finite quantity of land. Situation 1 is what actually happens between A and B, in which A obtains m from the land and B obtains n where m and n are, say, bushels of wheat (or gallons of moose milk, taken from the moose, which neither A nor B owns) (Cohen, 1995, p. 81). Cohen supposes that in this hypothetical situation A appropriates most of the land or an amount which leaves B less than enough to live off on what is left over such that B must sell his labor to A.

justice consists merely in the nonviolation of rights, no one can complain about "our absolute market mentality."

Table 1 – Counterfactual Situations

			II. B's Appropriation		
	Actual Situation (A's Appropriation)	I. Persistence of Common Ownership	(a) B's Talent = A's Talent	(b) B's Talent > A's Talent	(c) B's Talent < A's Talent
A gets	$m + q$	M	$m + p$	$m + q + r$	M
B gets	$n + p$	N	$n + q$	$n + p + s$	N
$q > p \geq 0$			$(r > 0; s > 0)$		

Source: Cohen, 1995, p. 81

According to Cohen's hypothetical model, A pays B a wage ($n + p$; where $p > 0$) such that B's welfare after the appropriation plus the wage for his labor is equal to B's welfare had there been no appropriation. A obtains $m + q$ from the new arrangement, where q is greater than p . The rise in output is due to the productivity of a division of labor designed by A, who is a "good organizer" (Cohen, 1995, p. 82). After the appropriation, B's welfare is the same, but A has increased his welfare because of the appropriation. According to the Nozickian proviso, A's appropriation is justified. However, B is worse off in a way that is not captured by the proviso: his life is dictated by A. Nozick, as someone who is committed to human autonomy, neglects the possibility that being under the control of someone else makes one worse off. Nozick's libertarian philosophy says that people control their own lives, or enjoy autonomy, implying that the range of a person's choices is related to his powers of deliberation and self control (Nozick, 1974, pp. 34, 48-51).

The table also offers Situation 2 to compare to Situation 1 to see if B's potential welfare is decreased by A's appropriation. Suppose that Situation 2 would have occurred had Situation 1 not occurred. In Situation 2, B appropriates most of the resources, and A has to sell his labor to B. A's welfare with a wage would remain the same as it was before

any appropriation, but B would be better off than he was in Situation 1. Thus, had A not appropriated first (Situation 1), B would have increased his welfare in Situation 2. In other words, A's appropriation robs B's potential welfare. The situation is symmetrical: had Situation 2 occurred instead, A would be the one who is robbed of his potential welfare.

The only way to justify one situation over the other is by some principle such as "first come, first serve" (Cohen, 1995, p. 80). Such a principle, however, is biased in favor of those who are quicker or greedier than the rest. But, note that for Nozick, a just appropriation is not one that is based on speed or greediness, but one that does not worsen the condition of others. To truly specify how B would not be made worse off with A's appropriation, B's welfare after A's appropriation would have to be compared to B's welfare under all possible alternatives. Situation 2 is a possible and better alternative for B that is blocked by A's appropriation. Nozickian proviso justifies A, even though its appropriation makes someone else worse off. Hence, the proviso is inconsistent. Since the Nozickian proviso is not consistent, it must be rejected.

Although Cohen shows that the libertarian account of property is morally unjustified, he is still attracted to Nozick's thesis of self-ownership. Cohen tries to reconcile libertarian self-ownership with his moral commitments to equality and autonomy (Cohen, 1995, p. 71). He does this by trying to conceive an initial distribution of the world's resources with libertarian self-ownership that would lead to equality. Cohen argues that if the world is originally jointly owned, then libertarian self-ownership could possibly be consistent with equality. To illustrate this, Cohen gives again a hypothetical situation of a two people world: *Able* and *Infirm*. *Able* has the physical

ability to labor. *Infirm* has little ability to labor; however, he is a joint owner of the material resources, and thus, has veto power over anything *Able* may want to produce. Each is a self-owner and they own all the material resources jointly. Cohen outlines the psychological profile of each as, “rational, self-interested and mutually disinterested” (Cohen, 1995, p. 95).³² He then asks how they will arrange production and distribution of the burdens and benefits of society.

There are five possible arrangements for *Able* and *Infirm*:

- a) *Able* cannot produce per day what is needed for one person for a day, so *Able* and *Infirm* both die.
- b) *Able* can produce enough or more than enough for one person, but not enough for two. *Infirm* lets *Able* produce what he can, since only spite or envy would lead him not to.³³ *Able* lives and *Infirm* dies.
- c) *Able* can produce just enough to sustain both himself and *Infirm*. So *Infirm* forbids him to produce unless he produces that much. *Able* consequently does, and both live at subsistence.
- d) If *Able* produces at all, then the amount he produces is determined independently of his choice, and it exceeds what is needed to sustain both *Able* and *Infirm*. They therefore bargain over the distribution of a fixed surplus. The price of failure to agree (the “threat point”) is no production, and, therefore, death for both.
- e) Again, *Able* can produce a surplus, but now, more realistically, he can vary its size, so that *Able* and *Infirm* will bargain not only, as in (d), over who gets how much, but also over how much will be produced.

For Cohen, the first three arrangements are uninteresting in terms of distributive justice. Since the first two result in either *Infirm* or both of them dying, there is no need to distribute the burdens and benefits of production. The third option involves subsistence

³²The point of these familiar stipulations is to trace what reflects the structure of rights as such, apart from special generosity or malice.

³³Alternatively, and on the assumption that each must eat in the evening to be alive the next day. *Infirm* allows *Able* to work for a day on condition that, at the end of it, a lottery decides who gets the food. If *Infirm* wins, *Able* dies and *Infirm* lives one day more than he would if *Able* wins (and then lives out his span).

living for both of them, and thus, distribution is an uninteresting cut in half. The fourth and fifth are interesting because they more closely reflect the present economy. They involve a surplus of goods above subsistence living. Hence, it is possible to normatively evaluate their method of distribution of the burdens and benefits of what is produced to see if the conditions of libertarian self-ownership and joint world ownership are justifiable.

To normatively evaluate the situation of *Able* and *Infirm*, there is a need to look at how they divide the burdens and benefits of production. Due to natural endowment *Able* must produce most of the necessities of life for the both of them. However, since *Infirm* is a joint owner of the material resources, he has veto power over anything *Able* may want to produce. This veto power could hypothetically be enforced by an omnipotent being. Hence, for either of them to survive they must bargain over how the material resources will be used. The threat point of their bargaining (failure to agree) is death for both. Cohen notes that *Able*'s superior productive capability will not give him an advantage in the bargaining process because *Infirm* can veto any arrangement that he does not think is fair. If *Able* deserves a greater share of what is produced, it is because labor is irksome not because it is his labor (Cohen, 1995, p. 96). This could lead to an egalitarian outcome in that *Able* will get enough to compensate for the disutility of labor and a portion equal to that of *Infirm*'s portion. Cohen concludes that joint world ownership prevents libertarian self-ownership from generating self-perpetuating inequality, which egalitarians would object to (Cohen, 1995, p. 96). He asserts that there is good reason to suppose that, at least in a world of people with different measures of talent, self-ownership is not consistent with human autonomy. However, unless there is initial joint

ownership over the world's resources, it is hostile to both equality and human autonomy. Accordingly, if everyone is to enjoy a reasonable degree of autonomy, it is necessary, at least in some circumstances, to impose restrictions on self-ownership.

Cohen's example of *Able* and *Infirm* demonstrates that libertarian self-ownership combined with joint ownership of the world's resources can lead to equality. However, Cohen rejects this theoretical reconciliation of libertarian self-ownership and equality because the concept of libertarian self-ownership becomes devoid of its intent (Cohen, 1995, p. 98). He writes: "Anyone who supports equality of condition must oppose self-ownership, even in a world in which rights over external resources have equalized" (Cohen, 1995, p. 72). Because, the intent of libertarian self-ownership is to let each individual use his or her talents at will as long as they do not harm another. However, under joint ownership, neither *Able* nor *Infirm* can act without the other's consent. Since each person is at the mercy of the other for survival, their libertarian self-ownership is only formal, which is to say that they are not autonomous beings. Hence, libertarian self-ownership and equality cannot be obtained through joint ownership of the world's resources except by restricting each self-owner's autonomy.

Since libertarian self-ownership and equality lose their appeal without autonomy, Cohen rejects this reconciliation of libertarian self-ownership with equality, concluding that libertarian self-ownership, equality and autonomy are incompatible. Since Cohen also has already shown that libertarian self-ownership – even with Nozick's theory of original appropriation does not justify inequality – he asserts that it is antithetical to equality, and thus, must be rejected (Cohen, 1995, p. 244).

After analyzing the relationship between self-ownership, equality and autonomy, Cohen criticizes Marxism in his presented *Able & Infirm* example as well. In virtue of *Infirm*'s access to the means of production and *Able*'s separation from those means of production, *Able* is compelled to sell his labor power to *Infirm*. However, for Cohen, because Marxists believe that labor appropriation is exploitative, they are committed to saying that *Infirm* exploits *Able* and it violates *Able*'s rights. According to Cohen, this shows that Marxists see self-ownership as a virtue, yet that involves a problem from an egalitarian point of view because there is nothing objectionable about the arrangement between *Able* and *Infirm* where *Infirm* is entitled to some aid from *Able* on the basis of fairness (Cohen, 1995, p. 150).

Beyond the Irreconcilability of Self-ownership with Equality and Autonomy

This section discusses the problematic nature of abstract individualism of libertarianism, which is ignored in Cohen's analytical analysis of Nozick's theory.³⁴

Cohen is quite right when he says that the principles of libertarianism try to justify the inequalities under capitalism that these principles are incompatible with equality and autonomy. Robert Nozick's libertarian vision provides a defense of the private property and free market where each individual is portrayed as a self-owner, sovereign over his specific rights. The right to private ownership appears as a fundamental moral or natural or theological right in his theory. His individualistic model of self-ownership is the conceptual foundation of the defense of *pure capitalism* in which the right to private property is absolute and unquestionable.

³⁴ Cohen's claims on Marx, capitalism and justice are analyzed in Chapter IV.

However, a serious analysis of the foundations of libertarianism requires a further discussion. This section questions the logical implications of the foundations of Nozick's libertarian individualism with his theory of right to property, minimal state, Nozickian proviso, and *Entitlement Theory of Justice*. Each argument is separately and jointly examined to explore their origin, to analyze their practical implications. It is important to note that this critique does not aim to justify or support any form of welfare state models or social state models under capitalism.

First, it is important to note the theological overtone of Nozick's ideas, and put them in some historical context. An insightful explanation of historical significance of Locke's writings for an appropriate comparison with Nozick's ideas can be found in Marx: "Locke's view is all the more important because it was the classical expression of bourgeois society's ideas of rights as against feudal society, and moreover his philosophy served as the basis for all the ideas of the whole of subsequent English political economy" (Marx, 1969, p. 367). In the early bourgeois liberal writings self-ownership takes on a historically progressive role as a weapon against the noncontractual claims of feudal lords to the labor of their serfs as a prelude to the new era of wage-labor. The demand for equal rights and the abolition of feudal inequalities was a precondition of the economic advance in the emerging capitalist society. By contrast, the abstract individualism of the liber(al)tarian-ism has now become the basis of the conservative argument against the welfare state, and more broadly against any state intervention in the free market economy. This, in essence, proposes to turn back the wheel of history in the name of minimizing state intervention and justifying private property. Hegel's famous remark, "all great world-historic facts and personages appear twice" reminds one of

Marx's comment on it – “first time as tragedy, the second time as [complete] farce” (Marx & Engels, 1969b, p. 398) – in connection with liber(al)tarian individualism. Thus, it is not without justification that the rebirth of self-ownership is a kind of effort that brings *medieval philistinism* to life. Thus, communitarian thinker C. Taylor is right to accuse Nozick of extreme individualism (Taylor, 1985, p. 187).

Similarly, Marx and Engels comment on Max Stirner (1806-1856), an early ideologist of bourgeois individualism and an originator of the idea of self-ownership, who equated personality with private property (Carus, 1972, p. 96).³⁵ They write: “Our kindly, credulous Jacques [Stirner] takes the bourgeois play on the words *Eigentum* [property] and *Eigenschaft* [characteristic feature] so literally, in such holy earnest, that he even endeavors to behave like a private property-owner in relation to his own features” and “his egoistical property, property in the extraordinary sense, is nothing but ordinary or bourgeois property transfigured by his sanctifying fantasy” (Marx & Engels, 1976, pp. 232, 368). In the lines of Nozick, human personality is equated with bourgeois private property by using self-ownership, which idolizes private ownership and justifies selfishness, to reproduce abstract and happy forms of capitalism.

It is also questionable that Nozick's moral principles are borrowed from Kant and Locke as he argues they are. Nozick thinks that both the principle of self-ownership and the right to private property derive from the idea of treating people as morally equal and free, or as “ends in themselves.” However, his concept of rights refers to those rights that are thought to exist independently of social recognition and legal enforcement (Lyons,

³⁵ Also, Dagobert Runes ranks Stirner as one of the literary founding fathers of nihilism, anarchism, and postmodernism and says that Stirner only offers a defense of individuality on the principles of self-ownership by equating personality with private property (Runes, 1984, p.318)

1984, p. 111). In Nozick's theory, the principle of self-ownership, upon which the idea of moral rights is based, appears to be an abstract expression of the right to private property.

In addition, Nozick's concept of human autonomy based on rationality and free will is ambiguous since his concept of self-ownership lacks any notion of *self-realization*. In Nozick's theory, men have the right to live separate lives because they are "capable of choosing autonomously among alternatives" (Nozick, 1974, p. 48). This capability is founded upon three characteristics: "rationality, free will and moral agency" (Nozick, 1974, p. 49). Nozick seems to believe that it is these characteristics of which each *self* consists. However, Nozick does not present any theory concerning the role of society or any divine power in the development of human rationality, free will, and moral agency. The life of each person has a connection neither with God nor with society, but with the person himself. Since the self has no connection with society, his theory of the right to self and property is not different from any abstract dogmatic theology that holds people free on metaphysical grounds. As a result, Nozick "abstracts self-ownership from its social and economic presuppositions, and thereby he understands it in terms of metaphysics as a pure individualistic matter" (Papaioannou, 2010, p. 17).

In the writings of the early representatives of natural law and natural rights tradition, like Locke and Kant, human beings have a theological and metaphysical essence that makes them equal, free, and inviolable. During the Enlightenment, the idea that men had certain God given rights gained popularity because that was a revolutionary idea at the time where birthrights were commonplace. Paul Kelly remarks that for Locke, people are equal and free because he thinks that they are the property of God, and so one cannot be a property of any worldly power (Kelly, 2007, p. 65). By contrast, in Nozick's

conception of self-ownership, one can kill himself or alienate himself from another, because in his view “one first needs a theory of property rights before one can apply any supposed right to life. ... the right to life cannot provide the foundation for a theory of property rights” (Nozick, 1974, p. 179). That is why for Nozick, an atheist pastor, self-owner’s kith and kin is not God but private property. The first conclusion to be drawn here is that Nozick’s libertarianism is not supported by any considerations of equality and freedom. Instead, his understanding of equality and freedom rests on the notion of free exchange and the right to private property.

Similarly, Nozick’s interpretation and treatment of Kant is not compatible with Kant’s own writings contrary to what he argues. In Nozick’s theory people can choose to be treated as if they are things, which can be alienating and enslaving. On the other hand, some argue that when Kant writes persons are “ends in themselves” he means that he treats “human beings as persons rather than things” (Ellerman, 1988, pp. 1109-10).³⁶ Ellerman argues that, contrary to Nozick’s interpretation of Kant, the *Kantian person/thing principle* regards human beings as persons “opposed to being used as nonperson or thing” (Ellerman, 1988, p. 1113).³⁷ Kant’s conception of human beings as distinct individuals who have dignity is not consistent with the implications of Nozick’s

³⁶ In order to partly clarify Kantian principle and show its irrelevance to Nozick’s concept it is worth taking the exact quotation from Kant. Kant writes: “Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature, have none the less, if they are nonrational beings, only a relative value as means and are consequently called things. Rational beings, on the other hand, are called persons because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves—that is, as something which ought not be used merely as a means—and consequently imposes to that extent a limit on all arbitrary treatment of them (and is an object of reverence)” (Kant, 1964, p. 96).

³⁷ Marx’s analysis of commodification of labor has some similarities with that of Kant. Marx’s concept of commodified labor is discussed in detail in Chapter IV; however, it is worth noting that the most important difference of Marx’s works on human nature from other concepts is that they have very strong roots in the mode of production and material conditions of life.

moral principles. In brief, beyond the crime of tweezing ideas of the great thinkers, Nozick's theory of rights is inconsistent and incomprehensible.

According to Susan Akin (1946-2004), Nozick's principle of self-ownership can result in "a bizarre combination of matriarchy and slavery" (Okin, 1989, p. 75). Okin argues that Nozick talks about people's claims to the products of their labor, but he ignores the fact that people are themselves the product of someone else's labor, namely, their mothers. Why, then, does the mother, who meets all of Nozick's criteria for legitimate ownership of the resulting product, not own her baby (Okin, 1989, p. 80)? Therefore, it seems that "matriarchal slavery" as a form of injustice likely makes Nozick's theory run into self-contradiction.

Robert Nozick does not defend private property and free market economy on the grounds of economic efficiency, nor does he justify distribution on the grounds of marginal productivity.³⁸ But his arguments rely on the notion of the *minimal state*, which is open to criticism on the basis of new developments in economic theory. Namely, both the theory of "contested exchange" and "transaction cost" economics, contrary to the Orthodox canon, reject an insular view of how markets work independently of institutions. Economic organizations and how markets work are also looked at through the lens of power.³⁹ In the standard Walrasian theory of competitive markets that Nozick assumes considerations of power and coercion are absent by assumption. As Bowles and Gintis remark, the only kind of power Orthodox economists would understand is

³⁸ E. K. Hunt (2002) refers several times to the marginal productivity theory as the main theory of distributive justice and one of the major tenets of neoclassical theory.

³⁹ For a detailed discussion of contested exchange, transaction costs, and roles of power and state in free economy, see Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1993), Robert Rider (1999), Douglas North (Chapter Three, 1981), Oliver Williamson (2005), Ronald Coase (1937), and Karl Polanyi (2001). Also, it is important to have a discussion of state; however, it is left untouched since working on state would not be satisfactory without a full discussion. For a detailed and sophisticated discussion of state see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1970, 2009), and Gramsci (2000).

“purchasing power” (Bowles & Gintis, 1992, p. 351). The way “production, allocation and distribution of wealth promote certain forms of power, regulate the exercise of this power, and establish the conditions for access to positions of power” undermines the certain forms of freedom under free market economy (Bowles & Gintis, 1992, p. 351). Nozick does not question the inequalities of power between the rich and the poor: a rich person’s charity does nothing to eliminate unequal power. Likewise, he does not take into account that under the existing inequalities in market economy wealth can buy power and the wealthy can force others into involuntary exchange since they have the means to provide employment.

In addition, Nozick takes it for granted that the emergence of free market economy was spontaneous, ignoring the important role of the state. For instance, it has been argued that the nineteenth century state was a *market maker* and a *market modifier* organization; such that “the liberal economic order was designed by the early English political economists and was instituted by the power of state” (Polanyi-Lewitt, 1995, p. 4). According to Polanyi, the early English political economists, such as J. Townsend (1739-1816), T. R. Malthus (1766-1834), D. Ricardo (1772-1823), J. Bentham (1748-1832), and E. Burke (1729-1797), constructed an intellectual system in which “the drive for a competitive market acquired the irresistible impetus of a process of Nature” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 132). “The self-regulating free market economy,” Polanyi writes, “was believed to follow from the inexorable laws of Nature, and the unshackling of the market to be an ineluctable necessity” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 132). Polanyi never believes that the market could really be fully disembedded from society; this is why he says that the “ineluctable necessity” of the “unshackling of the market” was believed is not a social

reality. When Polanyi writes, “the idea of a self-adjusting market implied a stark utopia” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 3), he means that the project of disembedding the economy from society was impossible. The role of the state in market economy since it emerged invalidates Nozick’s ahistorical concept of the minimal state for his theory of justice. Neither Nozick or any liber(al)tarian would deny that force – which makes his theory of justice run into self-contradiction – is always needed to enable the free market to operate.

An insightful explanation of Nozick’s concept of justice under capitalism can be found in the lines of Paul M. Sweezy (1910-2004) who writes:

Those who regard capitalist forms as natural and eternal – and, generally speaking, this includes most of those who live under capitalist forms – accept appearance as a true representation of social relations. On this foundation there has been erected the whole vast superstructure of ethical and legal principles which serve at once to justify the existing order and to regulate man’s conducts towards it. (Sweezy, 1968, p. 39)⁴⁰

Nozick’s moral theory does not go beneath the superficial forms to the underlying relations of man to man, and man to state. His theory of minimal state and justice in terms of abstract principles of libertarianism ignores the historically relative character of capitalist justice and capitalist legality because “it is only by means of a critical analysis of commodity production ... we can see the historical character of capitalism itself” (Sweezy, 1968, p. 39). Nozick’s conception of freedom thus appears, as an intellectual confusion because he accepts the relations between buyer and seller, who confront each other as equal and free, as true representations of social relations. Therefore, this sort of confrontation slights the social nature of man. The following quotation lays bare the libertarian conception of freedom:

⁴⁰ Similarly, after a critical examination of the commodity production Marx writes: “In present bourgeois society as a whole, this positing of prices and their circulation etc. appears as the surface process, beneath which, however, in the depths, entirely different processes go on, in which this apparent individual equality and liberty disappear” (Marx, 1993, p. 247).

[The bourgeois conception of freedom] is the right to do everything that harms no one else. The limits within which anyone can act without harming someone else are defined by law... It is a question of the liberty of man as an isolated monad, withdrawn into himself... The [bourgeois] right of man to liberty is not based on the association of man with man but on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual, withdrawn into himself. The practical application of man's right to liberty is man's right to private property... It makes every man see in other men not the realization of his own freedom, but the barrier to it... None of the so-called rights of man, therefore, go beyond man as a member of civil society, that is, an individual withdrawn into himself, into the confines of his private interests and private caprice, and separated from the community... The sole bond holding them together is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and egoistic selves. (Marx & Engels, 1975, pp. 162-4)

The passage poses the question of what is meant by freedom under capitalism. The freedom of the individual is a right to acquire private property. This conceptualization considers freedom as "the movement of the alienated life elements like property, industry, religion, etc.; [however] in reality, this is the perfection of ... slavery and ... inhumanity" (Marx & Engels, 1956, p. 157), masking the true social relations of man. Therefore, in Nozick's theory, the only legitimate function of a just state is to protect the properties of individuals from the invasions of others. That is why, for Nozick, the redistributive policy is the greatest horror that manifests its presence as a violation of justice under capitalism each time a millionaire is taxed a penny (Haworth, 1994, p. 71).

Also, the libertarian perception that redistribution is to be left to the gifts and voluntary charitable donations is arguable. Nozick argues that philanthropy and voluntary charitable contributions from the rich to the poor are the best way to reduce poverty (Nozick, 1974, p. 265). He says, "[a philanthropist] will continue to contribute so long as the others do (and will view his own contribution as very important, given that the others contribute)" (Nozick, 1973, p. 266). However, some argue that under complex market

societies, economic privation cannot be handled by individual charity. It was helpful to some extent during the medieval ages, because villagers knew each other well enough to govern relations “through norms, including, when necessary, a norm of charity, but now it can be handled by states” (Hardin, 1999, p. 39).

Last but not least, Nozick’s principle of justice in transfers assumes that the earlier owner had a legitimate title. The validity of property rights depends on the validity of previous property rights. Then, determining the validity of current property rights requires going back down the chain of transfers to the beginning. But what is the beginning? If the beginning of the series of transfers is not when the world was created, rather, when the first appropriation took place by an individual in Nozick’s theory, justice requires that the initial acquisition was legitimate (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 110-1). Nozick is aware that he needs an account to justify private ownership and appropriation. He remarks that there were times when “things come into the world attached to people, who have entitlements over them” (Nozick, 1974, p. 160).

Beyond that Nozick ignores the conditions that led to the emergence of private property, especially the pervasive role played by force. This makes it hard to use Nozick’s theory to defend existing inequalities. Generally the liber(al)itarians avoid talking about actual history, because, as Marx remarks, the history of private property is replete with “conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part” (Marx, 1972a, p. 714).⁴¹ The following quotation from Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Thorstein Veblen’s (1857-1929) ideas about the emergence of private

⁴¹ Marx says, “freedom of freedman,” the idolized illusory freedom that liber(al)itarians adore, came after all their own means of production had been robbed, and “all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire” (Marx, 1972a, p. 715).

property, which represent different historical periods and different schools of thought, are perfectly compatible with Marx's comments on the role of violence at the origin of private property. Rousseau, contrary to the belief that he condones private appropriation, sees private property as the source of all human misery. He writes:

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, took it into his head to say, 'This is mine,' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. The human race would have been spared endless crimes, wars, murders, and horrors if someone had pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men, 'Do not listen to this impostor! You are lost if you forget that fruits of the earth belong to everyone, and the earth to no one.' (Rousseau, 1984, p. 109)

Similarly, Veblen's account of the origin of private property is compatible with Marx's conceptualization. Veblen argues that private property developed during the predatory phase of the society and did not exist in the earlier peaceable period.⁴² The taking of captives, who were mostly women, was its historical origin which in turn began with the emergence of an economic surplus ushering in the predatory phase of social evolution (Veblen, 1898, pp. 353-65).

The pervasive role of violence in all these accounts of the historical emergence of private property implies that the initial appropriation of resources was illegitimate, and that in turn implies that the titles to current wealth are illegitimate. According to

⁴² Primitive man's being peaceful and cooperative is relevant in this context since it coincides with Herbert Gintis's argument on the "loss aversion" which made primitive man tend to avoid possible conflicts with his surroundings, since he valued loss higher than gain (Gintis, 2007, p. 15). Similarly, Stephen Hymer's interpretation of Robinson Crusoe is agreeable with the point presented here since Friday becomes Robinson's private property with deliberate and effective use of violence as an enforcement mechanism. With the use of violence, property relation was enforced to an extent that, after a point, even if Robinson does not use violence, the threat of using it makes Friday accept the hierarchy of Robinson. The central focus of Hymer's interpretation is on how Crusoe, the slave trader, uses the surplus of others to create a fortune. Hymer's analysis shows that Crusoe did not have any rights and merits till Thursday. After Friday he had chance of having a great weekend, leisure. For an excellent treatment of "Crusoe Economics," see Hymer (1980).

Nozick's theory, illegitimate acquisitions should be rectified: the principle of justice in rectification.

However, it is often impossible to know who the rightful owners are. Nozick suggests that the illegitimacy of the existing title should be rectified by a onetime general redistribution of resources in accordance with Rawls' *difference principle*.⁴³ Only after this redistribution of resources will the libertarian principle of transfer hold. However, as David Lyons argues, Nozick's ahistorical conceptualization implies that much of North America should be returned to the Native American, whose initial title was unjustly taken away (Lyons, 1981, pp. 374-5). Also, it has been argued that Nozick's principle of rectification requires reparations to African Americans for slavery (Valls, 1999, p. 229). Etruscan theocrat, Norman baron, American slave-owner, new or old colonizer, modern landlord or capitalist, they are all on the same chain through history. Put simply, Epimetheus Nozick opens up a Pandora's Box by trying to rectify past injustices in appropriation.

Contrary to Nozick's contention, his theory of distributive justice has no basis in history (De Gregori, 1979, p. 20). Far from being historical in any significant sense, Nozick's theory pointedly ignores human history. His principles of justice in acquisition and the principle of justice in transfer are dubious.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has tried to critically reflect on Nozick's individualistic moral and political theory by drawing attention to the foundations of his libertarian theory of justice

⁴³ John Rawls calls his *second principle* the *difference principle*. According to the principle, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: i) "to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged," and ii) "attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions for fair equality of opportunity" (Rawls, 1971, pp. 302-3).

to show that libertarianism does not generate any kind of defensible philosophy of justice for capitalism. As Cohen has shown that the libertarian theory of private property based on the premise of self-ownership is compatible neither with equality nor autonomy which are, Cohen argues, the defining characteristics of a just society.

Nozick's theory of individual rights presupposes a form of individualism that is problematical because the self-owner is disembedded from society and lacks sociality. Nozick extols the virtues of the enlightenment period individualism to justify *laissez-faire capitalism*. His abstract individualism reduces human beings to alienable things, to disembedded individuals who can be commodified. The notion of self-ownership neglects the noneconomic nature of man and extols the virtues of acting like *homo economicus*. His account of consent is at best superficial, and falls far short of conceptualizing dignified individuals with the inviolable rights that they are thought to possess in classical moral theory. Thus, his exceedingly selective reliance on Kant and Locke is inconsistent with the spirit of their work. Nozick's single minded idealization of private property and self-interested behavior on the basis of the principle of self-ownership amounts to a philosophical rejection of the very concept of society.

Nozick's account of the *minimal state* is a way to spread out the absolute individual rights to his political theory. Nozick neglects the role of the state in the emergence and functioning of free market economy because of his overemphasis on its capacity to self-regulate. Since Nozick's theory of the minimal state relies on abstract and metaphysical individualism on the basis of the principle of self-ownership, which is inconsistent, his theory of individual rights invalidates of his conception of night watchman state.

Nozick's *Entitlement Theory of Justice* is more about the rights to property, rather than about justice. Its main function is to protect and maintain the status quo under capitalism. As long as historical injustice is unresolved, Nozick's theory of justice implies that the status quo is invalid. Therefore, if one wishes to challenge liber(al)tarian arguments on justice and capitalism today, then, one should be interested in revisiting Nozick, refuting the key elements of his theory and showing the inconsistency in these elements as this study tries to do.

The next chapter explores Marx's analysis and critique of capitalism. It is argued that Marx's analysis of the labor process under capitalist production is the crucial element of his critique of the damage done to human autonomy and human development in capitalist society. Therefore, this study argues that capitalism is a barrier to human autonomy as socioeconomic system because the capitalist mode of production impairs and distorts human autonomy and development.

CHAPTER IV

KARL MARX'S ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM AND HIS CONCEPT OF JUSTICE AND HUMAN AUTONOMY

Introduction

The reaction of Analytical Marxists – or anyone committed to egalitarian society – to the growing inequality under the capitalist market economy is understandable. As Hardin remarks, the moral thinkers from Aristotle and Catholic philosophers, to modern time writers have viewed inequality as morally tainted, requiring some kind of rectification (Hardin, 1999, p. 399). The history of inequality is as old as the history of class divided societies. The early socialists such as Saint-Simonists, Fourierists, English Chartists etc., had the same requiem against the inequalities of infant capitalism. Engels rightfully criticizes them by writing: “they represented the infancy of the proletarian movement just as astrology and alchemy represented the infancy of science” (Marx, 1936, p. 561). Marx is one of the most misunderstood philosophers the world has ever known. As Cohen is yet another example of this, Marx’s critique of capitalism is mistakenly thought to rest on a moral indictment of inequality and exploitation is associated with. Indeed, there are many passages in *Capital* (1972a) that can give rise to such a misunderstanding.

Given the important role the discussion of *exploitation* plays in Cohen's writings, it is worth talking about how Marx uses the term before talking about Marx's critique of capitalism.

First, it should be noted that there are many uses of the term *exploit* in English. The term can have a moral connotation, but also not, as in "exploiting a mine." These uses are not a topic in the current discussion. Joel Feinberg's interpretation of exploitation is close to that of Marx's, focusing on the wage and labor relationship. He writes, "the word 'exploitation' is a technical term in Marxist economic theory, in which it refers to the coercive process by which capitalists hire workers for bare minimal wages because the workers have no alternatives except to starve. Then all the wealth created by the worker's labor (surplus value) goes to the employer" (Feinberg, 1990, p. 178). In addition, similarly, Paul M. Sweezy, as one of the leading Marxist economists of the second half of the twentieth century, interprets Marx's concept of exploitation in the labor process more as a technical term than a moral one. He writes: "in many noncapitalist societies (e.g. slavery and feudalism) the product of surplus labor is appropriated by a special class which in one way or another maintains its control over the means of production." He continues: "What is specific to capitalism is thus not the fact of exploitation of one part of the population by another, but the form which this exploitation assumes, namely the production of surplus value" (Sweezy, 1968, p. 62). However, to grasp Marx's most general conception of exploitation one must look at the following passage from *The German Ideology*:

Holbach depicts the entire activity of individuals in their mutual intercourse, e.g. speech, love, etc., as a relation of utility and utilization ... In this case, the utility relation has a quite definite meaning, namely, that I derive benefit for myself by doing harm to someone else (exploitation de l'homme par l'homme) ... All this is

actually the case with the bourgeois. For him only one relation is valid on its own account – the relation of exploitation; all other relations have validity for him only insofar as he can include them under this one relation, and even where he encounters relations which cannot be directly subordinated to the relation of exploitation, he does at least subordinate them to it in his imagination. The material expression of this use is money represents the value of all things, people and social relations. (Marx & Engels, 1976, pp. 409-10)

What is most striking in the passage is the extreme generality of the concept of exploitation. Marx describes all bourgeois relations as relations of harmful utilization for gain. According to Allen Buchanan, exploitation is not limited to the labor process itself. It is not simply that the bourgeois exploits the worker in the wage and labor relationship: “The point, rather, is that for the bourgeois human relations in general are exploitative, and this includes not only his relations with the worker, but with his fellow bourgeois as well ... [and] money facilitates the exploitation of every human capacity because it enable us to attach a price to every human capacity and to purchase control over its exercise” (Buchanan, 1979, pp. 125, 127). The point here is that the exploitative nature of capitalism accustoms individuals to think of human capacities as saleable and encourages exploitative relations among the members of society. The unconscious impact of capitalism on individuals will be argued below briefly, but it is worth noting that Buchanan’s interpretation of exploitation attracts attention to the adverse impact of capitalist relations on individuals at an unconscious level. Even though Buchanan does not examine the unconscious ill effect of capitalism on the psyche of the individual, his approach is important for bringing to awareness this unconscious impact. However, beyond the unconscious impact of exploitative relations under capitalism on individuals, it is argued that an accurate interpretation of Marx writings indicates that Marx’s concept of exploitation is a technical term in the wage and labor relationship and implies both

appropriation and oppression. Thus, *exploitation* is broader and more complex than in Cohen's account. Therefore, Cohen's interpretation gives an impoverished view of Marx's critique of capitalism as an unjust social formation.

The first section of this chapter investigates Marx's writings, especially *Capital* (1972a) to elucidate his notion of the creation and appropriation of surplus value, on the one hand, the social character of men's labor in commodity production, on the other, since Cohen thinks that there is only one important part of Marx' economic theory, the theory of exploitation and he deems it worthy of serious consideration. It is argued that this conceptualization ignores Marx's analysis of the defining characteristics of capitalist production.

The second part of the chapter explores Marx's writings on justice and moral critique of capitalism. Finally, Marx's concept of human nature is discussed in connection with his critique of capitalism on the basis of alienation and commodity fetishism.

Karl Marx's Analysis of Labor and Capitalism

Marx begins *Capital* (1972a) by analyzing commodities as a starting point for understanding how capitalist society functions.⁴⁴ First, Marx describes the dual character of the commodity. There are two aspects of a commodity: qualitative and quantitative. One aspect of the commodity is defined by how it is used. Marx calls this *use value*. Viewed qualitatively, a commodity is a use value. Marx defines use value by how the commodity "satisfies human wants of some sort or another" (Marx, 1972a, p. 35). When looked at as merely a use value, the commodity is indistinguishable from the process of

⁴⁴ At the beginning of *Capital* Marx writes: "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities" (Marx, 1972a, p.35).

satisfying human wants. So, as various kinds of uses to fulfill human wants, commodities “constitute the substance of all wealth, whatever may be the social form of that wealth” (Marx, 1972a, p. 36). However, Marx concludes that a commodity has some characteristics that are specific to capitalism, which only become clear when looking at its other aspect: *exchange value*. Viewed quantitatively, a commodity is an exchange value, which is not its physical or natural property. Exchange value implies an abstraction from the useful qualities and natural properties a commodity has. The substance of value is labor and the form of appearance of value in capitalism is exchange value.

The use value acquires value through exchange by independent producers. The nexus of exchange establishes the social relationship between producers and products within the social division of labor, and it is in this sense that exchange value is constituted by social relations. Marx writes: “It is only by being exchanged that the products of labor acquire, as values, one uniform social status, distinct from their varied forms of existence as objects of utility” (Marx, 1972a, p. 73). Once exchange is realized, labor acquires a twofold social character. Firstly, it must be useful *concrete labor* to satisfy some social need, and secondly, it must become *abstract labor* to be commensurate with other forms of labor.

Commodities circulate in the market by the actions taken by their owners. For commodities to enter into a relationship with each other, their owners must enter into a relation. Commodities, as things, are in principle alienable. For exchange to occur, it is necessary that each person treats others as i) the private owners of those alienable objects, and ii) independent individuals (Marx, 1972a, p. 87). Marx characterizes this relation as

reciprocally independent and atomic (Marx, 1972a, p. 92) and fixes this form of relation as historically specific to the capitalist mode of production.

Money, Marx argues, is a requirement of the exchange process: it is “a crystal formed of necessity in the course of exchanges, whereby different products of labor are practically equated to one another and thus by practice converted into commodities” (Marx, 1972a, p. 86). *Petit bourgeois* individualist visions of commodity exchange without the evil of money are, Marx clarifies, foolish and understandable. They are foolish because to get rid of money while leaving commodity production untouched is like retaining “Catholicism without the Pope” (Marx, 1972a, p. 87). Catholics and capitalists would have to reinvent the Pope and money respectively.

Goods involved in the market exchange appear as though they have a volition of their own. Money grows out of the exchange process and acquires the appearance of having an intrinsic value, and the goods acquire a super natural sense as if living in *Alice’s Wonderland*.⁴⁵ Ultimately, the super natural qualities of money, whether viewed as good by the capitalists or evil by the petit-bourgeois-individualist-socialists, are part of a socially produced illusion that arises out of the exchange process (Marx, 1972a, p. 92).

On the face of it, the capitalist goes to market, spends money on inputs for production, and produces a commodity which is sold for a value greater than what he spent for his inputs. The circuit “M-C-M” “takes place entirely within the sphere of circulation” (Marx, 1972a, p. 164). The problem as summarized in Chapter V of *Capital* (1972a) is: how can surplus (M') arise from the exchange of equivalents. Circulation

⁴⁵ Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898), better known by the pseudonym Lewis Carroll, in his book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1978) tells of a girl named Alice in a strange, mysterious and surreal world, which is topsy-turvy as capitalism, where words take on different meanings and nothing is quite as it seems.

creates no values and certainly no surplus value: “it is plain that no one abstracts more value... from circulation. There is no creation of surplus value” (Marx, 1972a, p. 160).

Marx argues that the capitalist must have found something in the first exchange (M-C) that allows him to realize a surplus. Since equivalents are exchanged for equivalents in the market, the surplus cannot arise out of exchange. The capitalist is fortunate enough to acquire in the market a commodity whose use value is greater than its exchange value: *labor power*. Marx defines labor power as follows: “By labor power or capacity for labor is to be understood the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use value of any description” (Marx, 1972a, p. 167). Labor power is introduced to distinguish the form labor takes in capitalist production. Put simply there has always been labor. But special historical conditions must occur for there to appear in the market labor for sale and thus, labor with an exchange value. The worker must be free to sell or alienate his physical and mental capacities. Most importantly, the worker must lack the materials and instruments necessary for production. So, Marx writes of the free laborer, “free in the double sense, that as a free man he can dispose of his labor power as his own commodity, and that on the other hand he has no other commodity for sale, is short of everything necessary for the realization of his labor power” (Marx, 1972a, p. 169). Labor power is the result of specific historical conditions, Marx states: “Nature does not produce on the one side owners of money or commodities, and on the other men possessing nothing but their own labor power. This relation has no natural basis, neither is its social basis one that is common to all historical periods” (Marx, 1972a, p. 169).

The capitalist historical epoch is distinguished by the appearance (out of the dissolution of feudal ties) of labor power and that “takes in the eyes of laborer himself the form of a commodity which is his property; his labor consequently becomes wage-labor” (Marx, 1972a, p. 170). When this point has been reached – labor having exchange value – the commodified form of labor has become universal.

The capitalist, Marx argues, is fortunate to have found the one commodity, which, as noted above, has an exchange value which is less than the value it can produce. Put simply, it is fortunate that the labor it hires creates more value than it costs. “Therefore, the value of labor power, and the value which that labor power creates in the labor process, are two entirely different magnitudes; and this difference of the two values was what the capitalist had in view, when he was purchasing the labor power” (Marx, 1972a, p. 193).⁴⁶ It is the concrete useful character of labor which is responsible for creating the value, turning means of production into a new product. Labor gives rise to a new creation for one extinguished. Marx, in Chapter Eight of *Capital* (1972a) emphasizes that means of production only transfer a value that exists prior to the production process, whereas labor produces new value. Marx introduces the categories, constant and variable capital to clarify this distinction (Sydney, 2010, p. 1).⁴⁷ Constant capital is “represented by the

⁴⁶ Not only is the value produced by labor power during a normal working day different from labor power’s own value, but the capitalist purchases labor power exactly because of this difference. Hence, the creation of surplus value, hence, the exploitation of the worker, hence, for Marx, the true source of all property income. Marx’s analysis shows that profits, interest, and rents (and all other nonwage incomes) are merely the divisions of surplus value among the capitalist class. Marx treats surplus value and profits as though they are identical, in order to explain and make clear the origins and magnitude of income derived solely from ownership of property.

⁴⁷ The dividing line between constant and variable capital in the process of creating value and surplus value is the same as that between objective and subjective factors of the labor process. These two aspects, constant and variable capital, form the objective and subjective aspects of production (Ehrbar, 2010, pp. 1423-4): “The same elements of capital which, from the point of view of the labor process, present themselves respectively as the objective and subjective factors, as means of production and labor power, presents themselves, from the point of view of the process of creating surplus value, as constant and variable capital” (Marx, 1972a, p. 209).

means of production, by the raw material, auxiliary material and the instruments of labor” (Marx, 1972a, p. 209) and its defining characteristic is that its value does not change in production. By contrast, variable capital is that part of capital advanced that undergoes an alteration in value during production. “It both reproduces the equivalent of its own value, and also produces an excess, a surplus value, which may itself vary, may be more or less according to circumstances” (Marx, 1972a, p. 209).

Marx says that labor process has a twofold character: it is *abstract labor* and *concrete labor*. If what counts, from the perspective of producing use values, is concrete labor and the qualities of the object, then, from the perspective of producing surplus value what counts is abstract labor and its quantity.⁴⁸ Marx states that concrete labor is “the medium for expressing abstract human labor” (Marx, 1972a, p. 58). Abstract labor lives on in the commodity as labor. Marx says that as values, the commodities are crystallized abstract labor (Marx, 1972a, p. 40). For Marx, abstract labor is a social and historical category. More accurately, it is the form labor takes when subsumed by capital.

What counts for the capitalist is quantity, specifically a quantity of labor power measured by time.⁴⁹ “Labor does not count as productive activity with a specific utility, but simply as value-creating substance, as social labor in general which is in the act of objectifying itself and whose sole feature of interest is its quantities” (Marx, 1990, p.

⁴⁸ Ehrbar explains what Marx means by *counts* that there is a discrepancy between what the commodity is (physically) and what it counts as socially, between its physical existence and what it represents is the value relation. By count as the embodiment of “abstract human labor” Marx means: “the tailor produces something which cannot only be used as a garment, but which can also be exchanged. The tailoring labor makes more than just coats” (Ehrbar, 2010, p. 402).

⁴⁹ E.K. Hunt (Hunt, 2002, p. 211) explains that “abstract labor determines exchange value” means Marx has two important qualifications. First, it is only the socially necessary labor time that counts: “The labor time socially necessary is that required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time” (Marx, 1972a, p. 39). Second, the computation of values requires that skilled labor be reduced to a simple multiple of unskilled labor. As Marx puts it in *The Poverty of Philosophy*: “we should not say that one man’s hour is worth another man’s hour, but rather that one man during an hour is worth just as much as another man during an hour. Time is everything, man is nothing; he is, at the most, time’s carcass” (Marx, 1963, p. 54).

1012). Marx continues, “in the eyes of capital each sphere of production is simply a sphere in which capital is invested in order to produce more money, in order to maintain and increase already existing money or to acquire surplus labor” (Marx, 1990, p. 1012). In order to produce surplus value, the capitalist is compelled to use labor power for a period of time in excess of the time necessary to produce value equal to the variable capital advanced. The capitalist advances variable capital with the intent of extracting surplus labor time; generates surplus value through the mechanism of *absolute surplus value* through lengthening of the working day beyond the time necessary to produce a quantity of commodities of value equal to the variable capital advanced. Chapter Ten of *Capital* (1972a) is devoted to a detailed historical account of the actual struggle between capitalists and workers to determine the length of the working day. Marx argues that capitalists struggle to extend the length of the working day to the limit of human endurance: if one tries to derive the length of working day from the laws of commodity exchange, one gets different results if one looks at it from the point of view of the worker than if one looks at it from the point of view of the capitalist (Ehrbar, 2010, p. 1451). Marx’s description of the history of this struggle is rich in detail and cannot be summarized here. In a nutshell, the motive of capitalists engaged in this struggle is, “in its blind unrestrainable passion, its werewolf hunger for surplus labor, capital oversteps not only the moral, but even the merely physical maximum bounds of the working day...All that concerns it is simply and solely the maximum of labor power, that can be rendered fluent in a working day” (Marx, 1972a, pp. 264-5).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ “The establishment of a normal working-day” Marx writes, “is the result of centuries of struggle between capitalist and laborer.” In every instance of this conflict, “Capital is reckless of the health or length of life of the laborer, unless under compulsion from society” (Marx, 1972a, p. 270). Marx notes that “though the health of a population is so important a fact of the national capital, we are afraid it must be said that the

However, the desire to increase surplus value through absolute surplus value reaches certain limits in the length of the working day. The capitalist now increases surplus value by shortening the period of necessary labor time rather than by lengthening the period of surplus labor time. With this development “capitalist production now establishes itself as a mode of production sui generis;” a revolutionized mode of production through the application of the social forces of production (science and technology) to the labor process, which Marx refers to as the “real subsumption of labor” under capital. “The real subsumption of labor under capital is developed in all the forms evolved by relative, as opposed to absolute surplus value” (Marx, 1990, p. 1035). The development of the process of “relative surplus value” necessarily entails revolutionizing the means of production. The impetus for this is inherent in the nature of the constraints on the capitalist. The desire to do so is greatly enhanced when the capitalist realizes the “laws of competition” and that such techniques could lead to super profits visàvis other producers using older techniques. Chapter Twelve of *Capital* (1972a) clearly manifests that the capitalist’s werewolf hunger for surplus labor, desire to get more surplus value kindles every single effort to increase productivity (Marx, 1972a, pp. 317-9).

It is worth noting that surplus labor has not been discovered by capital. The thirst for surplus labor arises from the nature of the production itself Marx states:

Wherever a part of society possesses the monopoly of the means of production, the laborer, free or not free, must add to the working-time necessary for his own maintenance an extra working-time in order to produce the means of subsistence for the owners of the means of production, whether this proprietor be the Athenian *χάλος χάγαθός* [well-to-do man], Etruscan theocrat, civis Romanus,

class of employers of labor have not been the most forward to guard and cherish this treasure” (Marx, 1972a, p. 270).

Norman baron, American slave-owner, Wallachian Boyard, modern landlord or capitalist. (Marx, 1972a, p. 235)⁵¹

However, within capitalism exploitation takes place without direct coercion and takes the form of extraction of surplus value by the capitalist class. And capitalist exploitation, production and appropriation of surplus value, according to Marx, occur in the process of production.⁵²

Even though the sphere of circulation, the surface activity on the market and the sphere of production make up the totality of capitalist reproduction, Marx draws a clear distinction between spheres of exchange and production to go beneath the surface appearance of capitalist relations. Perhaps nowhere else is Marx so bitterly ironic as in the passage where he lays bare the norms that justify commodity exchange and shows freedom and equality are the illusions of the sphere of circulation:

This sphere [of circulation]... within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labor power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity... are constrained only by their own free will. They contract as free agents... Equality, because each enters into relation with the other... and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to himself. The only force that brings them together and puts them in relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain and the private interests of each. Each looks to himself only, and no one troubles himself about the rest, and just because they do so, do they all, in accordance with the pre-established harmony of things, or under the auspices of an all-shrewd providence, work together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal and in the interest of all. (Marx, 1972a, p. 176)

⁵¹ The difference between precapitalist and capitalist appropriation of surplus value lies in essentially incomparable modes of domination, or to use Marx's terms, supremacy and subordination. Precapitalist relations were based on direct coercion, while capitalism is based on free sale of labor power; free from political and religious constraints and subsumed under capital (Marx, 1972a, pp. 235-6). The difference lies in the manner by which surplus labor is appropriated: "... the method by which surplus labor is extorted" (Marx, 1990, p. 1025).

⁵² As seen in Chapter II, for Cohen, exploitation occurs in the process of circulation, and therefore the process of circulation appears to be the origin of surplus value as an unjust wealth transfer.

The wage slavery, the inequalities and the class basis of property ownership that define the production process are dissolved in the market where buyer and seller confront each other as equals. It cannot be realized that the labor must sell his labor power to survive, as he has no access to the means of production.

On the other hand, production relations under capitalism are characterized by the exploitation of labor for the sake of extracting surplus value, so the capitalist production is an act of hierarchy, subordination and governance.⁵³ The capitalist aspect of production requires maximizing the extraction of a surplus value and the production of surplus value or the extraction of surplus labor arises from the subordination of labor to capital. That makes the governance function despotic and authoritarian because the labor force has to create as much surplus value as possible: “the control of the capitalist is in substance twofold by reason of the two fold nature of the process of production itself, which, on the one hand, is a social process for producing use values, on the other, a process for creating surplus value in form that control is despotic” (Marx, 1972a, pp. 331-2). This two-fold nature of cooperation, according to Marx, is, on the one hand, a social process for producing use values, on the other, a process for creating surplus value. Despotism in capitalist production is not intrinsic to the social aspect of production; it is simply intrinsic to its capitalist feature which requires surplus value to be maximized and imposes therefore, the subjection of labor to capital. The desire to do so is enhanced by the laws of competition.

⁵³ For Marx, capitalist cooperation created a specific need for direction to coordinate individual activities. Marx tells us that the capitalist aspect of production requires maximizing the extraction of a surplus value, which makes the governance function despotic and authoritarian because the labor force has to create as much surplus value as possible (Marx, 1972a, pp. 331-2). The organization of a firm therefore plays a fundamental technical function because the many advantages produced by cooperation do not go to the benefit of workers. Hence new institutionalist economists Ronald Coase (1910 - ...) and Oliver E. Williamson (1932 - ...) treat the need for governance as a primary *raison d'être* of firm under capitalist economy (Coase, 1937; Williamson, 2005).

The same argument exists in Chapter Twenty One of *Capital* (1972a) where Marx defines “piece wages” as “the most fruitful source of reductions of wages and capitalistic cheating [because] they furnish to the capitalist an exact measure for the intensity of labor”⁵⁴ since “the quality of labor is here controlled by the work itself, which must be of average perfection if the piece price is to be paid in full ... [therefore,] piece wages lay the foundation of ... a hierarchically organized system of exploitation and oppression” (Marx, 1972a, p. 553). Marx thinks that piece wage is the form of wages most in harmony with the capitalist mode of production because it gives the capitalist sufficient control over production to draw up standard labor costs and “the exploitation of the laborer by capital is here effected through the exploitation of the laborer by laborer” (Marx, 1972a, p. 554). Thus, piece wages achieve an increased rate of exploitation via increasing intensity of labor while at the same time they remove the difficulties of the control by the capitalist over the labor process. Similarly, Braverman argues that piece wages are used in modern times “to enlist the worker as a willing accomplice in his or her own exploitation ... piece rates are combined with the systematic and detailed control on the part of management over the process of work” (Braverman, 1998, p. 43).

Marx says that the production relations under capitalism are characterized by the exploitation of labor for the sake of extracting surplus value. Marx’s analysis shows that the history of the capitalist mode of production is the history of the appropriation and accumulation of surplus value. On the other hand, the production of surplus is only an appearance, a semblance. Producers do not stand in any human or social relation to other producers, since their “respective products are the means, the mediator, the instrument,

⁵⁴ It is surprising that Marx’s treatment of piece wages as the fertile source of wage theft does not take a place in Cohen’s claims to support the idea that Marx thinks that capitalism is an unjust system because of wage robbery.

the acknowledged power of our mutual needs” (Marx & Engels, 1975, p. 226). Produced objects have value, significance, and meaning because they are instruments or means to the satisfaction of the desires of both the producers and purchasers. From a selfish and egoistic viewpoint, everything and everyone becomes instrumental. “For me, you are rather the means and instrument of producing this object that is my aim, just as conversely you stand in the same relationship to my object” (Marx & Engels, 1975, p. 227).

As seen above, for the capitalist-labor relations, Marx says that the *workman* has no choice but to sell himself to capital on the capitalist’s term. Marx writes: “The Roman slave was held by fetters: the wage-laborer is bound to his owner by invisible threads. The appearance of independence is kept up by means of a constant change of employers, and by the fictio juris of a contract” (Marx, 1972a, p. 574). Marx’s concept of surplus labor, applicable to all class societies, is not part of a theory of justice. But, capitalist exploitation is a specific form of extraction that involves the transformation of labor power into a commodity. Therefore, an accurate interpretation of Marx’s writings on exploitation, especially in *Capital* (1972a), indicates that exploitation, for Marx, is a technical process that facilitates capitalists’ ceaseless, unending drive to accumulate capital, and is thus, based on capitalists’ control over the labor process.

By contrast, what Cohen understands from exploitation is totally different as it ignores the social relations of capitalism. Therefore, Cohen’s notion of exploitation has no connection to capitalist relations of production. Cohen reduces the critique of capitalism to a matter of one’s feeling about the fairness or unfairness of the natural and initial endowment of talents.

Karl Marx on Justice and Morality

Since Marx writings indicate that his analysis is fundamentally a critique of existing conditions, not an attempt to force the world to conform to some predetermined ideal, before exploring his critique of capitalism, it is important to discuss Marx's ideas about justice and his moral critique of existing societies.

First, as Marx's writings indicate, his works are fundamentally about the existing society, rather than some abstract utopia. Marx writes:

We do not want to dogmatically anticipate the world, but only want to find the new world through criticism of the old ... constructing the future and settling everything for all times are not our affair, it is all the more clear what we have to accomplish at present: I am referring to ruthless criticism of all that exists ... [therefore,] we do not confront the world in a doctrinaire way with a new principle: Here is the truth, kneel down before it! We develop new principles for the world out of the world's own principles ... We merely show the world what it is really fighting for, and consciousness is something that it has to acquire .. The reform of consciousness consists only in making the world aware of its own consciousness, in awakening it out of its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions. (Marx & Engels, 1975, pp. 142, 144)

The ruthless criticism and the reform of consciousness is not about informing the world what rational and just society would be. It is not based on an ethically desirable theory of rational choice as in Cohen's *Able & Infirm* example; rather, it is about the real revolutionary process itself as it unfolds in the real world. Marx argues that there is no natural justice, no justice that is permanently valid:

To speak of natural justice... is nonsense. The justice of the transactions between agents of production rests on the fact that these arise as natural consequences out of the production relationships. The juristic forms in which these economic transactions appears as willful acts of the parties concerned, as expressions of their common will and as contracts that may be enforced by law against some individual party, cannot, being mere forms, determine this content. They merely express it. This content is just whenever it corresponds, is appropriate, to the mode of production. It is unjust whenever it contradicts that mode. Slavery on the basis of capitalist production is unjust. (Marx, 1972b, pp. 339-40)

Marx's interpretation of the concept of justice pays attention to the different standards for different historical epochs. For each mode of production there has developed different concepts of justice appropriate to it. The following quotation makes the point through the satirical lens of irony: "the American constitution, the first to recognize the rights of man, in the same breath confirms the slavery of the colored races existing in America: [what a contrast, how inconsistent that] class privileges are proscribed, race privileges sanctified" (Engels, 1976, p. 134). In the similar sense, in ancient times, for instance,⁵⁵ human sacrifice was common and has been practiced in various cultures but now it only means atrocity and savagery; the act is morally unjustified. Similarly, for example, in ancient times, since the prevailing system included the practice of slavery, slavery was just. But while slavery is not just in the capitalist system (except wage slavery), this does not mean that capitalism satisfies any particular standard of justice to a higher degree than earlier modes of production. There are merely different standards for different historical epochs.

The main reason why, for Marx and Engels, justice is an ephemeral juridical concept, an abstract general standard dependent at any determinate time is because they both believe that ideas are the product of the development of social relations of human beings and material world reflected by the human mind. And the thought of the individual man is the result of "the individual thought of many millions of past, present ... man" (Engels, 1976, p. 107). Both Marx and Engels reject ideas, moral norms and principles based on transcendental reality. They reject every attempt to impose moral dogma because they think they are ahistorical. "Morality, religion... and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of

⁵⁵ Dr. Korkut Erturk proffered the following critique in one of our conversations.

independence. They have no history, no development” (Marx & Engels, 1969b, p. 25).

They see all moral theories as, Engels writes in *Anti-Dühring*, as “the product of the economic conditions of society obtaining at the time.” Engels continues:

...as society has hitherto moved in class antagonisms, morality has always been class morality; it has either justified the domination and the interests of the ruling class, or ever since the oppressed class became powerful enough, it has represented its indignation against this domination and the future interests of the oppressed. That in this process there has on the whole been progress in morality, as in all other branches of human knowledge, no one will doubt. But we have not yet passed beyond class morality. A really human morality which stands above class antagonisms and above any recollection of them becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class antagonisms but has even forgotten them in practical life. (Engels, 1976, p. 119)

Engels concludes that a really human morality stands above all class antagonisms.

Therefore, “Law, morality, religion are ... so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests” (Marx & Engels, 2009, p. 20).

These quotations explain why Marx and Engels never say that capitalism is unjust because it violates the worker’s rights. They do not charge capitalism with being unjust because they see the notion of justice as historically determined, a product of a given social relations in a particular period in history. That means different types of society are characterized by different ethical standards, values, and norms, which change as societies with which they are linked evolve. However, this does not mean that Marx does not advance normative arguments for criticizing capitalism. Such arguments revolve around human autonomy, consciousness, individuality, and sociality.

As Nicholas Churchich indicates both Marx and Engels share the view that moral norms and principles in class society are unavoidably relative. In the class divided society, the common interests and moral aspirations are always expressed in terms of reactionary and illusionary ideals which lead to self alienation and egoistic absurdities

(Churchich, 1994, p. 15). The demand for justice exists merely as the antithesis of injustice, equality as that of inequality. However, to demand equality for justice or demand justice for equality as the highest principle and ultimate truth is absurd. This is why for Marx and Engels “the real content of proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the abolition of classes. Any demand for equality which goes beyond that, of necessity passes into absurdity” (Engels, 1976, p. 135). It is obvious that Marx’s conception for justice, equality, and freedom is entirely different from liber(al)tarian and analytical Marxist conceptions.

Marx was a sustained critic of moral thinkers such as French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) and German socialist-political activist Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864) who condemned capitalism for being an unjust socioeconomic system.⁵⁶ For Marx, for instance, the interpretation of appropriation of surplus value and property as unjust treatment and theft, respectively, implies that they are accidental as if capitalists could act differently if they so chose.

The normative aspect of Marx’s critique of capitalism, argued in the following section, sees the nature of commodity production and private property regime as an alienating force, one that undermines human autonomy and the ability of self-realization.

Karl Marx’s Critique of Capitalism and Human Autonomy

Marx’s theory of human nature and concept of human autonomy occupy an important place in both his critique of capitalism and his conception of future society. His analysis of alienation and commodity fetishism is a key to understand the capitalist society, for it is this analysis which reveals the dehumanizing character of capitalist

⁵⁶ See Marx’s *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1963) and *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1933).

society. For Marx, human autonomy or human freedom is a capacity of people to determine their own actions in a community which is able to provide for the full development of human potentiality (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 78). For Marx, man's right to freedom under capitalism:

is man's right to private property... the right of self-interest...It makes every man see in other men not the realization of his own freedom, but the barrier to it [because] it is not based on the association of man with man but on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual, withdrawn into himself. The sole bond holding them together is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and egoistic selves. (Marx & Engels, 1975, pp. 162-4)

Therefore, for Marx, the private property regime is an alienating force as it presupposes that the human being is an egoistic monad, seeking his self-interests without regard for other men. At an unconscious level, the nature of capitalism encourages private interests such as hope of gain and fear of starvation among the members of society. Marx's concern is that man is constrained by his social environment, which limits his creative powers and impoverishes him. The totality of man, the unity of different aspects, is broken into separate entities under capitalism with the result that man is not self-determining but a victim of his circumstances, chained to specialized tasks as an isolated, alienated, and egoistical individual.

Marx's conception of human nature relates human needs and abilities to self-realization and free activity, which in turn become the constitutive basis of a harmonious community. It is both the foundation of his normative critique of capitalism, and informs his conception of the future society. However, this does not mean that Marx's writings on human autonomy and nature are theology or metaphysics. On the contrary, Marx's concept of human nature has very strong roots in the mode of production and material

conditions of life. Also, it is clear that Marx would emphatically deny such an ascription to his works. For Marx, human autonomy or freedom,

... can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature ... The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite. (Marx, 1972b, p. 820)

Autonomy or freedom, then, can be best understood as a function of human capacity to collectively manipulate the environment in satisfying ways, and as the individual capacity to be actively and consciously engaged in coconstructing community as a whole. Marx considers human nature, the essence of man as referring to “the inherent development potential of every human being when that development proceeded in the natural or proper way” (Hunt, 1987, p. 97). The human essence, which is defined in terms of human potentiality, is just like the “potential of being a mighty oak is inherent in an acorn” (Hunt, 1978, p. 286). If the conditions within which a being actually exists do not permit that being to realize its own potential, then the existence of that being contradicts the essence of it. The social relations of capitalism do not permit the individual to realize his own potential, therefore, the existence of human beings contradicts the essence of human being (Hunt, 1987, p. 97).

E. K. Hunt’s conceptualization of the free development of human potential, which considers the different aspects of human beings, is compatible with Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)⁵⁷ and Abraham Harold Maslow’s (1908-1970)⁵⁸ ideas, who theorize about human development based on human potentiality and wholeness even though they do not

⁵⁷ Carl G. Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist, the founder of analytical psychology.

⁵⁸ Abraham H. Maslow was an American professor of psychology and the creator of the famous Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

explicitly consider the effect of capitalism as a socioeconomic system on the realization of human potential. For example, Jung's concept of *individuation* describes the process by which man becomes whole by integrating different aspects of his existence through self-realization and actualization. He writes: "Individuation means becoming a single, homogenous being, and, in so far as 'in-dividuality' embraces our innermost, last, and, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self. We could therefore translate individuation as 'come to self-hood' or 'self-realization'" (Jung, 1963, p. 352). Self-actualization involves the development of human potential and is inherent in the recognition and integration of other aspects of man just as the potential of being a mighty oak is inherent in an acorn.

Similarly, Maslow's concept of self-actualized individual is the result of the fulfillment of a variety of human needs which are necessary conditions for the actualization of human potential (Hunt, 1978, p. 288). Maslow writes that self-actualization is "the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities, and the like" (Maslow, 1987, p. 126). Maslow's theory is based upon a hierarchy of needs in which self-actualization involves the higher needs, whose satisfaction opens the door for further human development and include as their precondition satisfaction of lower needs, i.e., the physiological needs, the safety needs, the belongingness and love needs, and the esteem needs (Maslow, 1987, pp. 15-22). Maslow's concept of a self-actualized individual is similar to what Marx refers to when he talks about the "conscious life activity" through which human beings are a species being and conscious being, which is reversed by estranged labor under capitalism (Marx, 1986, p. 113).

The uniting element of Marx's thought with these concepts is the idea that the conditions within which man lives under capitalism does not permit him to realize his own potential. His alienating existence thwarts his autonomy, preventing the fully actualized free development of his potential.

In a similar vein, Erich Fromm remarks that Marx's concept of future society follows from his concept of man. His concept of future society is not a society of regimented, automatized individuals, regardless of whether there is equality of income or not; it is the emancipation from alienation, the return of man to himself, his self-realization (Fromm, 1968, p. 5). The concept of the active, productive man who grasps and embraces the objective world with his own powers cannot be fully understood without envisioning a world free of alienation. Therefore, the opposite of alienation is actualization of self-activity and the abolishing of alienation is humanity's leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

Al Campbell says that it is commonly accepted that both Marx and Engels infrequently provide positive descriptions of postcapitalist society but broadly explain the "dehumanizing aspects of capitalism in their writings" (Campbell, 2010, p. 270). He also emphasizes that Marx's *Vision of a Better Society* is deeply seated in his conceptualization of the social character of human nature since human beings are always and everywhere found in a social life and social interactions. It is also rooted in potential human development, which goes along with human nature, as a way of breaking the barriers posed to free development of individualities (Campbell, 2010, p. 272-3).

Therefore, what Marx criticizes is the restriction imposed on potential human autonomy, man's creative abilities, and sociality by capitalism. For Marx, the private

property regime and its laws of economic competition gives rise to the impoverished, atomistic and utilitarian social world of Bentham. As argued above, with the subordination of labor to capital under capitalism, labor is separated from its bearer, and the human being becomes alienated from his creative powers. In commodified labor, Marx refers to separation of man from its bearer, human being, who becomes estranged from the product of his labor, from his life activity, from his species being, and from other men (Marx, 1986, pp. 112-4). Of the impact of capitalism on individuals, Marx writes:

In estranging from man (1) nature, and (2) himself, his own active functions, his life activity, estranged labor estranges the species from man. It changes for him the life of the species into a means of individual life. First it estranges the life of the species and individual life, and secondly it makes individual life in its abstract from the purpose of the life of the species, likewise in its abstract and estranged form. (Marx, 1986, p. 112)

In addition, within the universal development of capitalist production and exchange, capitalism makes human universality possible while at the same time alienating man from this universality:

The degree and the universality of the development of wealth where this individuality becomes possible supposes production on the basis of exchange value as a prior condition, whose universality produces not only the alienation of the individual from himself and from others, but also the universality and the comprehensiveness of his relations and capacities. (Marx, 1993, p. 162)

According to Marx, private property with division of labor is the source of alienation. Although private property is not equated with capitalism, alienation as a process reaches its peak only in capitalism. The reason for this is that in this system, not only does man's own product but also his own labor power, total mental and physical abilities characterizing his agency, become a commodity as an independent alien entity. In other words, only capitalism makes the process of alienation culminate in fetishism. In

a nutshell, Marx's concept of alienation and fetishism is an argument that, under capitalist production the worker becomes the victim of circumstances, turning into an isolated and alienated individual by losing control over his life activities and work. As a consequence, he becomes estranged from his very human nature, from his free and productive activity. The worker ceases to be an autonomous being in any significant sense as he is turned into a replaceable *thing* in the capitalist production apparatus where "the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relations both with one another and the human race" (Marx, 1972a, p. 72).

This is the overlapping element between Polanyi's (Polanyi, 2001) and Marx's thought. They both criticize that the very attributes of human beings such as autonomy, individuality, and sociality, are violated under capitalism. In this regard, the most destructive effect of capitalism on human lives is its negation of human autonomy, a fact which reaches its peak with the commodification of labor power; capitalism impinges upon human autonomy by forcing human beings to act like *homo economicus*, which in turn implies the negation of the essential human being: the individual under capitalism is no longer a social being. The most immediate effect of this process is atomization of individuals, each of which only behaves in accordance to the profit motive and the fear of starvation, irrespective of the other members of the society (Polanyi, 2001, p. 172). This process involves the instrumentalization of human beings: economic relations are seen not as relations between human beings but as relations between things and forces independent of human control. Thus, commodification of the whole-life activity is the process of undermining and destroying human autonomy.

In his analysis, Marx never says that capitalism is unjust because it violates the worker's rights; instead he focuses on the particular social relations between the worker, his product, and his activity that lead to alienation in the labor process. For Marx, the labor process "is the instrument of the valorization process, of the process of capital's self valorization – [the process of the creation of surplus value]. The labor process is subsumed under capital and the capitalist intervenes in the process as its director, manager" (Marx, 1990, p. 1019). This is at the same time directly a process of the exploitation of alien labor. Marx calls this "the formal subsumption of labor under capital [which] is the general form of every capitalist process of production" (Marx, 1990, p. 1019). This formal subsumption of labor under capital is a condition and presupposition of appropriation and production of relative surplus value, which is regarded as the result of the motive behind capital accumulation and also considered a real subsumption of labor under capital in a more developed form through the application of social forces of production when the capitalist directly takes the control of production. Therefore, the labor process comes to be an instrument determined by the process of valorization, the production of surplus value which appears as the desired goal. The desire is greatly enhanced when the capitalist realizes the laws of competition. The important consequence of this process, which is specific to capitalist mode of production, is that labor produces the condition for its domination and alienation. Therefore, this process takes a form as a means of enslavement of labor. Of the relationship between exploitation and alienation, Marx writes:

The more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more values he creates the more valueless, the more unworthy he becomes; the better formed his product, the more deformed becomes the worker; the more civilized his object, the more barbarous becomes the worker; the more powerful labor becomes, the

more powerless becomes the worker; the more ingenious labor becomes, the less ingenious becomes the worker and the more he becomes nature's bondsman. (Marx, 1986, p. 109)

Labor performs miracles for the owners of the means of production but it makes a detrimental impact on the life of worker.⁵⁹ Consequently, the workers relate to the product of their labor as to an alien object: "the social character of his labor confronts the worker as something not merely alien, but hostile and antagonistic, when it appears before him objectified and personified in capital" (Marx, 1990, p. 1025). And the primary consequence of alienated labor is fetishism. Marx's analysis not only points to this, but also explains it as the mystified self power of capital with origins of the commodity form of capitalist relations and the ultimate origin of fetishistic appearance of social reality in capitalism. As Marx states it:

The objective conditions essential to the realization of labor are alienated from the worker and become manifest as fetishes endowed with a will and soul of their own. Commodities, in short appear as the purchasers of persons. The buyer of labor power is nothing but the personification of objectified labor cedes a part of itself to the worker in the form of means of subsistence in order to annex the living labor power for the benefit of the remaining portion, so as to keep itself and even to grow beyond its original size by virtue of this annexation. It is not the worker who buys the means of production and subsistence, but the means of production that buy the worker to incorporate him into the means of production. (Marx, 1990, pp. 1004-5)

⁵⁹ This point in turn provides another basis for complete alienation of the worker from the contribution of his labor, which is reduced to a nonentity because history gives no place to the real achievements of history, to the contribution made by laboring classes. An insightful and poetic explanation of this alienation, alienation of consciousness, can be found in the lines of the great German poet Bertolt Brecht's (1898-1956) *A Worker Reads History* in which the real face of the world history, the inability to recognize this feature is described by a certain lyricism. For the lyrical and satirical description of the contribution of laboring classes, he writes: Who built the seven gates of Thebes? / The books are filled with names of kings. / Was it kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone? / Any Babylon, so many times destroyed, / Who built the city up each time? In which of Lima's houses, / That city glittering with gold, lived those who built it? / In the evening when Chinese wall was finished / Where did the masons go? / ... Each page is a victory, / At whose expense the victory ball? / Every ten years a great man, / Who paid the piper? / So many particulars. / So many questions.

Hence, the wage and labor relationship is turned upside-down, so that “the products of laborers turned into independent powers, products as rulers and buyers of their producers ... confront the laborer as properties of their products” (Marx, 1972b, p. 815). And the realization of labor is not the point of dealing with criticism of the wealth transfer in Marx’s lines, but “loss of realization for the workers; objectification as loss of the object and bondage to it; appropriation as estrangement, as alienation. So much does labor’s realization appear as loss of realization that the worker loses realization to the point of starving to death” (Marx, 1986, p. 108). Man, hereby, is motivated by hope of gain and fear of hunger and behaves in accordance to the profit motive and the fear of starvation and is coercively prevented from having a free life producing “in accordance with the laws of beauty” (Marx, 1986, p. 114).

In Marx’s works, the question of reduction of labor to a means to life, which undermines human autonomy, is the basis of his critique of capitalism. Marx demonstrates that human social activity becomes “a material thing outside man” having an “estranged, alienating and self-disposing species nature” (Marx, 1986, p. 168). This shows that a dimension of human activity outside the realm of production, a dimension of labor, as human beings exist. The analysis of dimensions of labor as human being is grounded in a theoretical level. Therefore, Marx’s analysis of the labor process in capitalism is a conceptualization of the alienation of labor with all the various components, the mystifying and dominating aspects of alienation. And his theory is a historical explanation of the appearance of labor as a commodity and all the implications that this appearance has for social theory. Marx’s vision of labor emancipated from the domination of capital is the same formulation in terms of nonalienated labor. Marx

attempts to capture these implications in the economic concepts he elaborates as the labor theory of value. Because Marx's theory operates on both the historical and theoretical level, and with an appearance and reality distinction, it can hardly be correct Cohen's claim that Marx treats labor as an ideological instrument. Cohen's failure is not to recognize the wholeness of Marx's analysis of capitalism and connectedness of his thoughts.

For Marx, because of the reason stated above, the capitalist mode of production is not compatible with the individual's autonomy: the right of self-realization, self-actualization, and self-determination underlie together. Marx finds capitalism in his analysis as a barrier standing in the way of human freedom and autonomy, a barrier to human emancipation.

Concluding Remarks

Insofar as production involves the appropriation and transformation of nature, it is organized around some type of property relations which have existed in all societies and in all historical epochs. What interests Marx is the question of what features are peculiar and specific to capitalism. For Marx, the legal foundation of capital is the law of private property as it exists in the capitalist mode of production. The laws of private property and the order of the capitalist mode of production and circulation, which both perpetuated ruling class' power, are the mechanism, by which the ruling class coercively expropriates the economic surplus created by the working class who is separated from all means of production. So, that is sufficient for capitalism to start moving according to its own laws of motion, ceaseless, unending drive to accumulate capital (Hunt, 2002, pp. 233-4). For Marx, the capitalist mode of production is not conducive to human autonomy and has

become a source of dehumanization; it undermines human autonomy on the basis of alienation and the fetish character of commodity production which represents the commodification of life itself.

This historical process signifies the separation of human beings from their natural surroundings, from each other and even from their own capacities and power (Marx, 1986, pp. 112-4). Hence, the abolition of private property is Marx's solution, the route to human emancipation, and return of man to himself for totality of human being as a social total being. Thus Engels writes: "The slave frees himself by rupturing of all private property relations only the relation of slavery, and thereby becomes himself a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general" (Marx & Engels, 1969b, p. 84). It gives the people the freedom that the bourgeois private property regime denies them. The following quotation lays bare that Marx's concept of human autonomy is anything more than a critique of tyranny and oppression. Neither Nozick's liber(al)tarian-ism nor Cohen's analytical Marxism can see society as the realization of human autonomy. The problem with these narrow notions of freedom is that they wind up condoning the violation of broad notions of freedom. In the *Manuscripts of 1846*, Marx writes of:

Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social being – a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equal humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man – the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. (Marx, 1986, p. 135)

For Marx, such a community would be the actualization of real human autonomy, human freedom. It is clear that the narrow notions of human autonomy presented in *Able & Infirm* examples of cleanly generated two male persons society, in which *Able and Infirm* make a tradeoff between autonomy and equality and production does take place not as a social relation and process,⁶⁰ does not have any affinity with Marx's concept of human autonomy.

Cohen's analytical analysis is problematical because it is based on a hypothetical model defined in terms of individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and purposes as they are themselves matters to be explained. Marx stresses that the analysis of society must start from the structure of social relations, not from individual motivations or choices. The isolated individual of Cohen's model is open to criticism since, as Marx indicates:

The point is rather that private interest is itself already a socially determined interest, which can be achieved only within the conditions laid down by society and with the means provided by society; hence it is bound to the reproduction of these conditions and means. It is the interest of private persons; but its content, as well as the form and means of its realization, is given by social conditions independent of all. (Marx, 1993, p. 156)

For Marx, "Man is no abstract being, squatting outside the world" (Marx, 1968, p. 11-2) but "the social being" and whose life "is therefore an expression and confirmation of social life" (Marx, 1986, p. 138) and production (the activity of human beings modifying the natural environment in order to meet their needs) is always social. Production, as a social process, involves relations between individuals. In the social production of their existence, human beings "inevitably enter into definite relations,

⁶⁰ As Marx says, "production by an isolated individual outside society ... is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other" (Marx, 1993, p. 84). Therefore, Nancy Holmstrom rightly criticizes that the relationship between *Able* and *Infirm* in the example does not represent the capitalist and worker relationship. She adds that it is inconceivable for political philosophers to frame their debates in abstraction from society, history, and politics (Holmstrom, 1997, p. 586).

which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production” (Marx, 1970, p. 20). These relations are a product of a long process of historical evolution, and as such are not the result of deliberate choice floated along a logical positivism.

In a similar vein, Veblen writes of “the accumulated, habitual knowledge of the ways and means involved in the production and use of these appliances is the outcome of long experience and experimentation” (Veblen, 1908, p. 153). Veblen indicates that production is always a social and cultural phenomenon in which output could never be said to be purely the result of any person or factor of production as opposed to Cohen’s abstract individualist model. Production is a social process in which individuals share knowledge and skills, have passed them on from generation to generation, and have cooperated socially in a process of transforming nature to suit human needs and uses (Hunt, 2002, p. 322).

Cohen, thus, dissects society into its simplest elements, and discovers in doing so that the simplest society consists of at least two people. However, he does not question that these two people may be morally or intellectually unequal. This simple fact leads to the idea the simplest elements of society are not two men, but a woman and a man, who found a family, the simplest and first form of association for the purpose of production (Engels, 1976, p. 122). But this cannot in any way suit Cohen because the founders of society must come to appreciate that equality for an egalitarian society is the sole intrinsic value.

On the other hand, as Engels states, a two men world is doomed beforehand to disaster, because two men, *Able* and *Infirm* can never by themselves bring a child into the

world since women are not considered and the equality of people is at most the equality of heads of families (Engels, 1976, p. 122). This means Cohen's two person society is characterized by male domination and female subordination. Therefore, the equality in a two person world is not only an unquestioned and unproven theological axiom but is even a great unpardonable exaggeration. Cohen's demand for egalitarian society in material terms, which is of course primeval, is no different than the bourgeois demand for equality or promoting equality.

In reality, the demand for equality has been "the spontaneous reaction against the crying social inequalities, against the contrast between rich and poor, the feudal lords and their serfs, the surfeiters and the starving" (Engels, 1976, p. 135). However, "the real content of proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the abolition of classes. Any demand for equality which goes beyond that, of necessity passes into absurdity" (Engels, 1976, p. 135). Cohen's famous logically positivist abstract two man world model is able to conduct their economic relations on the basis of equality because this seems quite natural to popular egalitarian analytic prejudice. And Cohen does not want to call his abstract, self-interested, and alienated individual to abolish classes for equality in order keep his analysis in a rigorous and scientific shell after he faced the disappointing results of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In addition, Cohen's discussion of the tradeoff between equality and freedom cannot go beyond a fruitless and superficial analysis. Freedom or autonomy does not consist in any dreamt of independence based on veto power on an abstract model, but "command over ourselves and over external nature, a command founded on knowledge of natural necessity; it is therefore necessarily a product of historical development"

(Engels, 1976, p. 144). Freedom does mean neither to make egalitarian, nor rational, nor arbitrary choices among many different and conflicting possible decisions on presupposed grounds that equality is to be reckoned an intrinsically desirable good. Only within abolishing “class distinctions or anxiety over the means of subsistence for the individual and in which for the first time there can be talk of real human freedom” (Engels, 1976, p. 145). As a result, Cohen’s view is only a form of ethical individualism, a quite particular individualistic formulation of the question of economic justice, as it is a far cry from Marxism.

Additionally, Cohen’s contention that Marx’s socialist proportionality principle is a right of inequality is questionable. Firstly, as discussed and shown by the following quotation, Marxism is fundamentally a critique of existing conditions, not an attempt to force the world to conform to some predetermined ideal: “Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence” (Marx & Engels, 1969b, p. 38). Also, what is the most misunderstood concept is that every single thing in bourgeois society, or in any society, cannot be abolished overnight. The development of rights under socialism in Marx’s own words is as follows:

One man is superior to another physically to another, mentally, and so supplies more labor in the same time, or can labor for a longer time; and labor, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This equal right is an unequal right for unequal labor. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as a natural privilege. ... Thus, with an equal output, and hence an equal in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal. (Marx & Engels, 1936, pp. 564-5)

Here Marx, as a depth realist, sketches the development of rights under socialism and takes into account the necessity of conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole society even though it does not remove the defects. Continuing, Marx says: “these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after “prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society.” Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined” (Marx & Engels, 1936, p. 565). Before Marx comes to his famous saying, he again talks about the development of productive force as a natural necessity to abolish alienation, to emancipate labor, and to eliminate “the antithesis between mental and physical labor” (Marx & Engels, 1936, p. 566). Also, more importantly, if abundance will be at stake, it is an indubitable fact that the material success of the future society will not be “due to the willing, indeed the enthusiastic, subordination of man to the needs of the machine” as it has been in capitalism (Polanyi, 1947, p. 109). Since capitalism is a barrier to real human autonomy, and “responsible for the splitting up of man’s vital unity into *real man*, bent on material values, and his ‘ideal’ better self,” and human beings are squeezed by the motives of *hunger* and *gain*, the payoff matrix resulting from historical development of capitalism demands responsibility of humanity for “the vital task of restoring the fullness of life to the person, even though this may mean a technologically less efficient society” (Polanyi, 1947, pp. 112, 116).

When the all narrow and inhumane horizons of class-divided societies are left behind, as V. Adoratsky writes down a note that, people will have become accustomed to being a part of social life in where voluntary work takes place according to every person’s ability. In this society, there is no need for someone to calculates the quantity of

products to distribute them to each member of the society; “each will take freely according to his needs” (Marx, 1936, pp. 566-7).

After exploring Marx’s analysis and critique of capitalism, it becomes clear that Cohen’s approach takes Marx’s analysis and critique of capitalism as an *underpayment account* and a requiem for a soft hearted capitalist. It is also clear that Cohen’s arguments for his critique of Marx’s concept of exploitation relies heavily on a very literalistic reading of *theft* and *steal* in some of Marx’s writings; rather, consistently relies on French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), who sloganeered “*Property is theft*” in his 1840 book *What is Property*.⁶¹ When Cohen uses the quotations from Marx’s works, what he misses out is that Marx talks about the contradiction between the foundation of bourgeois production and its development and says that the exploitative nature of capitalist production as the source of the wealth is the fundamental underpinning of the alienation under capitalism. In concerned works, the capitalist is not a theft in a material sense; theft and steal are used metaphorically to allege wrongdoing because he is a theft on the basis of the dehumanization process of capitalism. According to him, exploitation as a “formal subsumption of labor under capital” is the inevitable result of the capitalist mode of production as a mechanism of satisfying capital’s needs for surplus value. Also, it represents the particular social relations of capitalism that give to capital and capitalists control of all labor process. It is clear that Marx’s theory is not a wholly exploitation centered critique of capitalism which lacks a proper understanding of the historical features of capitalism. Indeed, the reason Marx holds, his ruthless criticism of capitalism

⁶¹ Proudhon defines property 60 times as a robbery in his book *What is Property* (Proudhon, 1970). Marx responds to Proudhon’s expression “property is theft” in the letter to J. B. Schweitzer *On Proudhon* writing: “... since ‘theft’ as a forcible violation of property presupposes property, Proudhon entangled himself in all sorts of figments of the imagination, obscure even to himself, about true bourgeois property” (Marx & Engels, 1969, p. 26).

for the reform of consciousness of man as an active agent of history is that capitalism undermines human autonomy. In the lines of Marx, capitalism is a barrier to human autonomy and capitalists are the ones who steal the opportunities of “free development of individualities” (Marx, 1993, pp. 704-6). Marx’s detailed examination of the features of the capitalist mode of production facilitates a better understanding of the impact of capitalism on human autonomy. It uncovers the underlying fact that the impact results in alienation of the individual from himself, others, and nature, thereby, thwarting his attempts at self-realization and self-actualization and attainment of the ultimate form of humanness. For Marx, human autonomy within the unity of human sociality and individuality is broken down in capitalism. Since labor power, the total mental and physical abilities and capacities of a human being, becomes a commodity in capitalism, the notions of alienation and fetishism are essential in demonstrating the dehumanizing and undermining aspect of this system on human nature and human autonomy.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Concluding Overview of The Chapters of The Thesis

This thesis has examined the writings of Nozick, Cohen, and Marx to resolve the controversy surrounding the concepts of exploitation, equality, human autonomy, and justice under capitalism. In general, an effort is made to sort out the conceptualization of capitalism, exploitation, equality, human autonomy, consciousness, self-realization, self-actualization, and justice.

For this purpose, this study has tried to critically reflect on Nozick's moral and political theory, drawing attention to the foundation and formation of his theory of justice which makes capitalism the most free and just society. As argued, Nozick's libertarian philosophy misuses the concept of freedom. He sees freedom as intrinsic to capitalism, but he does not give proper notice to the constraints which necessarily accompany it. To think of capitalism as a realm of freedom is to overlook the nature of capitalism. It is not an aim of this study to be *The Last Supper* of liber(al)tarian philosophical diaspora, but it has tried to contribute modestly to the critique of this canon. Therefore, this study means that it is inaccurate to treat libertarianism as a philosophical theory for which good and consistent arguments, with well founded premises, can be produced. More specifically, Cohen's claims that there are close affinities between libertarianism and Marxism, libertarian concept of self-ownership and Marx's concept of exploitation are rejected.

The early bourgeois liberal writings on self-ownership were a historically progressive weapon against the noncontractual claims of feudal lords on the labor of their serfs. Now, libertarianism takes it as purely reactionary and conservative argument against the welfare state, specifically state intervention in the free market economy. Contrary to liber(al)tarian arguments, self-ownership cannot protect freedom, it violates freedom. Therefore, Cohen is right when he concludes that self-ownership cannot be compatible with equality and autonomy; it is only a way of justifying capitalist inequality in libertarianism. Nozick's philosophy clearly equates human personality with private property. He uses the concept of self-ownership to idolize the private property regime to justify excessive egoism and pure selfishness, and to reproduce an abstract and happy form of capitalism. His masterpiece *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* is like *Mona Lisa*'s face: for libertarians she is smiling, from a critical point of view she is very sad. His theory fails to represent itself as an ideal of freedom, equality, and justice in any significant sense. Nozick's concept of justice is nothing more than a form of secularization of medieval theological notions. In short, libertarianism appears to be trapped by being between Scylla and Charybdis because of its ideological incoherence to justify private ownership and slavery in capitalism under the name of a theory of justice.

It is not reasonable to link the libertarian idea of self-ownership to Marx's concept of exploitation. The usage of the term exploitation in Marx's writings does not necessarily require the further conclusion that capitalism is an unjust socioeconomic system that violates the worker's rights. Therefore, it is not reasonable to claim that Marx criticizes or blames the wealth transfer from worker to capitalist for income inequalities under capitalism for the sake of future egalitarian societies; he indeed, presents a deep

and detailed analysis of commodity production under capitalism to comprehend the characteristics of capitalist production and the social character of man's own labor which is the source of the mystery. Also, as seen on the critique of Nozick, Marx was familiar with the idea of self-ownership and was an outspoken critic of it. For example, Max Stirner (1806-56), a leading exponent of individualism and the originator of the idea of self-ownership, is sharply criticized by Marx, in *German Ideology* to which a large and significant part was devoted (Hook, 1936, p.165).⁶² According to Marx and Engels, the understanding of individuality as self-ownership could not convey essential human reality but only illusionary forms of flawed bourgeois reality.⁶³

Cohen's contention is that the Marxist theory of exploitation rests on the notion of self-ownership, which should be questioned because it violates equality and human autonomy. But, such a conception of exploitation is entirely unrelated to Marx's analysis and critique of capitalism. Cohen contends that Marxists' deepest beliefs require that they should distance themselves from libertarianism with its thesis of self-ownership, and that they should embrace an anti-self-ownership view, a more egalitarian view, since he believes that no theory of freedom can offer a complete picture of just society as illustrated in the *Able & Infirm* example, but only a theory of distributive justice can do so.

The main tenets of Cohen's positivist and ethical claims are as follows: Cohen argues that capitalism is condemned by Marx on moral grounds, and that capitalism is an

⁶² Two thirds of *The German Ideology* are devoted to the critique of "Saint Max" as an impotent idealist. According to Lobkowitz, the sections on Stirner are longer than Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* itself; approximately 125,000 as opposed to 116,000 words (Lobkowitz, 1969, p. 69).

⁶³ In Marx and Engels' point of view, Stirner's notion of the self-owner is a genius concept in the way of bourgeois stupidity since it is merely a religious solemn parody of Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1832) bookkeeping and false picture of solipsistic, self-creation, and self-control (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 259).

unjust social system because exploitation is a form of injustice. The strong merit of Cohen's view is that it can provide a way to see Marx's distinction between the different perspectives from which capitalism can be judged. There is the bourgeois perspective from which capitalism appears to be a moral and just social system, one which allows for individual freedom, self-actualization, and equality. This perspective is one which focuses on the appearances of the market exchanges, and that is incompatible with the reality of capitalism within the sphere of production.

There are at least four difficulties with Cohen's positivist egalitarian position. First, Cohen's interpretation of exploitation is not compatible with that of Marx. As seen in structuring Marx's theoretical analysis of creation and appropriation of surplus value, his actual view on exploitation is that he considers it as a formal and technical process and the particular social relations of capitalism that give to capital and capitalists control of all labor process. According to Marx, exploitation, which is intrinsic to the mode of production and a specific form of extraction that includes viewing labor power as a commodity, is the practice which enables capitalism to exist and continue as a social practice. An accurate interpretation of Marx indicates that his analysis and critique of capitalism is not an exploitation centered critique of capitalism, or underpayment account. Indeed, an exploitation centered critique of capitalism in terms of distributive social justice lacks a proper understanding of the features of capitalism by presupposing capitalists could act differently. Such a moral critique of the bourgeois property regime answers nothing.

Second, Cohen's approach fails to articulate important connections between exploitation, alienation, and human autonomy. In Marx's works, alienation and

exploitation are internally related, so that eliminating one requires eliminating the other. The third defect in Cohen's analytical analysis is that it involves a "commitment to highly questionable, reductionist and/or metaphysically inflected version of MI [methodological individualism]" (Kumar, 2008, p. 191). This study has argued that an abstract individualism is shared by both Nozick and Cohen on their discussions of capitalism and justice. Cohen's technique of logical and linguistic analysis is based on a reductionist methodological individualism and his concept is an individualistic formulation of the question of economic justice. Also, Cohen, like other analytical Marxists, considers exploitation only in isolated individual activities without analyzing them in their social context. Cohen's views appear to be merely the most egalitarian wing of the liberal economic theory. His assessment of justice reduces the critique of capitalism to a matter of a hypothetically created individual's feelings about the fairness or unfairness of income distribution as a result of the distribution of initial natural talents, advantages, etc.

The last one, the primary inadequacy, is that Cohen fails to offer a complete explanation and a proper treatment of human autonomy which is undermined by the existing society. Marx believes and argues that capitalism is an obstacle to human autonomy on the way of free and full development of each individual. Therefore, given other interpretations of Marx's views which do not ascribe to such claims, and given that these interpretations are more accurate, it is reasonable to reject this linguistically ethical version as an implausible explanation of Marx's views.

As argued, Marx's critique of capitalism is based on his concept of human autonomy, human nature, and his theory of alienation. The importance of human nature to Marx's thought cannot be overlooked. Marx not only arrives at the necessity of

abolition of private property regime through it, but also conceives how the world ought to be according to it. For Marx, capitalism prevents the full realization of freedom and is a barrier to free human development and human autonomy, and therefore, the freedom provided to the individual by the social system should be increased for free development of individualities in a society in which the behavior of the individual is not conducted on the basis of the motives: fear of starvation and hope of gain. The criteria for this judgment are based on a scientific examination of the existing system of capitalist production. Human autonomy and freedom refer to a life of self-realization, self-actualization and determination in a harmonious community in which private property regime is abolished. This life reflects the realization of what Marx conceives as “truly human,” in other words, the realization of human essence that is strengthened by real human autonomy which is the underlying principle for human consciousness, individuality, sociality, self-realization, and actualization.

Finally, and naturally enough, to give a picture of real human autonomy and to share a hope it would not be unrealistic to say that men would find themselves telling a fairytale with a happy ending when they are asked what the world was like. The world they describe would seem as strange and unbelievable to them as the Ancient World does to today. And they would find themselves saying: “You are not going to believe this, but once...” while the men would “hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner” just as having a mind and “without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman, critic” (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 47).

Future Study

This study would be significantly strengthened by involving a large number of perceptions about the conscious and unconscious impact of capitalism on autonomy, self-realization and actualization of the individual. If a study brings the common elements of the works of K. Marx, K. Polanyi and A. Gramsci with the views of analytical and transpersonal psychologists, such as C. Jung, A. Maslow, etc. by focusing upon suggestive parallels on the totality of man as an active agent of history and connection between autonomy, fetishism, and alienation, such a work could provide a more robust assessment of the impact of capitalism as socioeconomic system on the individual, specifically on consciousness, self-realization, self-actualization, human nature, and human autonomy.

REFERENCES

- Allen, D. (1981). Marx and Engels on the distributive justice of capitalism. In K. Nielsen & S. C. Patten (Eds.), *Marx and morality* (pp. 221-250). Guelph, Ont.: Canadian Association for Pub. in Philosophy.
- Bader, R. M. (2010). *Robert Nozick*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1992). Power and wealth in a competitive capitalist economy. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 21(4), 324-53.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1993). The revenge of homoeconomicus: Contested exchange and the revival of political economy. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17(1), 83-102.
- Braverman, H. (1998). *Labor and monopoly capital: The degradation of work in the twentieth century*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
- Buchanan, A. (1979). Exploitation, alienation, and injustice. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 9(1), 121-139.
- Buchanan, A. (1981). The Marxian critique of justice and rights. In K. Nielsen & S. C. Patten (Eds.), *Marx and morality* (pp. 269-306). Guelph, Ont.: Canadian Association for Pub. in Philosophy.
- Campbell, A. (2010). Marx and Engels' vision of a better society. *Forum for Social Economics*, 39(3), 269-278. doi: 10.1007/s12143-010-9075-4.
- Carroll, L. (1978). *Alice in wonderland*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Carus, P. (1972). *Nietzsche and other exponents of individualism*. New York, NY: Haskell and House.
- Churchich, N. (1994). *Marxism and morality: A critical examination of Marxist ethics*. Cambridge: James Clarke.
- Coase, R. H. (1937). The nature of the firm. *Economica*, 4(16), 386-405. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0335.1937.tb00002.x.
- Cohen, G. A. (1979). The labor theory of value and the concept of exploitation. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 8(4), 338-360.

- Cohen, G. A. (1986). Self-ownership, world-ownership, and equality. In F. S. Lucash & J. N. Shklar (Eds.), *Justice and Equality Here and Now* (pp. 108-135). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Cohen, G. A. (1986b). Self-ownership, world ownership, and equality: Part II. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 3(02), 77-96. doi: 10.1017/S0265052500000315.
- Cohen, G. A. (1988). *History, labour, and freedom: Themes from Marx*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cohen, G. A. (1990). Marxism and contemporary political philosophy, or: Why Nozick exercises some Marxists more than he does any egalitarian liberals. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Supplementary Volume 16*, 363-387.
- Cohen, G. A. (1995). *Self-ownership, freedom, and equality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, G. A. (1998). Once more into the breach of self-ownership: Reply to Narveson and Brenkert. *The Journal of Ethics*, 12(1), 57-96.
- Cohen, G. A. (2000). *Karl Marx's theory of history: A defence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cohen, G. A. (2009). *Why not socialism?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen, G. A., & Graham, K. (1990). Self-ownership, communism and equality. *Preceding of the Aristotelian Society*, 64, 25-61.
- De Gregori, T. R. (1979). Market morality: Robert Nozick and the question of economic justice. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 38(1), 17-30. doi: 10.1111/j.1536-7150.1979.tb02857.x.
- Dworkin, R. (2003). Equality, luck and hierarchy. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 31(2), 190-198. doi: 10.1111/j.1088-4963.2003.00190.x.
- Ehrbar, H. G. (2010). Annotations to Marx's capital. *Ehrbar's Marx annotations*. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.utah.edu/~ehrbars/akmc.htm>.
- Ellerman, D. P. (1988). The Kantian person/thing principle in political economy. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 22(4), 1109-1122.
- Elster, J. (1985). *Making sense of Marx*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Engels, F. (1976). *Anti-dühring*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press.

- Exdell, J. (1977). Distributive justice: Nozick on property rights. *Ethics*, 87(2), 142. doi: 10.1086/292025.
- Feinberg, J. (1990). *The moral limits of the criminal law volume 4: Harmless wrongdoing*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Fried, B. H. (2005). Begging the question with style: Anarchy, state, and utopia at thirty years. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 22(1), 221-254. doi: 10.1017/S0265052505041099.
- Friedman, J. (1997). What's wrong with libertarianism. *Critical Review*, 11(3), 407-467. doi: 10.1080/08913819708443469.
- Fromm, E. (1968). *Marx's concept of man*. New York, NY: Ungar.
- Geras, N. (1985a). *Marx and human nature: Refutation of a legend*. London: Verso.
- Geras, N. (1985b). The controversy about Marx and justice. *New Left Review*, 1/150, 47-85.
- Geras, N. (1992). Bringing Marx to justice: An addendum and and rejoinder. *New Left Review*, 1/195, 37-69.
- Gintis, H. (2007). The evolution of private property. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 64(1), 1-16. doi: 10.1016/j.jebo.2006.02.002.
- Gramsci, A. (2000). *The Gramsci reader: Selected writings, 1916-1935*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Hardin, R. (1999). From Bodo ethics to distributive justice. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 2(4), 399-413.
- Hasnas, J. (2003). Reflections on the minimal state. *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*, 2(1), 115-128. doi: 10.1177/1470594X03002001426.
- Hasnas, J. (2005). Toward a theory of empirical natural rights. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 22(1), 111-147. doi: 10.1017/S0265052505041051.
- Haworth, A. (1994). *Anti-libertarianism: Markets, philosophy, and myth*. London: Routledge.
- Hayek, F. A. (1978). *New studies in philosophy, politics, economics and the history of ideas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Holmstrom, N. (1997). Book review: Self-ownership, freedom, and equality by G. A. Cohen. *The Philosophical Review*, 106(4), 583-586.

- Hook, S. (1936). *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the intellectual development of Karl Marx*. New York, NY: Reynal & Hitchcock.
- Hunt, E. K. (1978). The normative foundations of social theory: An essay on the criteria defining social economics. *Review of Social Economy*, 36(3), 285-309. doi: 10.1080/00346767800000018.
- Hunt, E. K. (1987). Philosophy and economics in the writings of Karl Marx. In S. W. Helburn & D. F. Bramhall (Eds.), *Marx, Schumpeter and Keynes: A centenary celebration of dissent* (pp. 95-120). New York, NY: Sharpe.
- Hunt, E. K. (1992). Analytical Marxism. In B. Roberts & S. Feiner (Eds.), *Radical economics* (pp. 91-107). Boston: Kluwer Academic.
- Hunt, E. K. (2002). *History of economic thought: A critical perspective*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Husami, Z. I. (1980). Marx on distributive justice. In M. Cohen, T. Nagel, & T. Scanlon (Eds.), *Marx, justice, and history* (pp. 42-79). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hymer, S. (1980). Robinson Crusoe and the secret of primitive accumulation. In E. J. Nell (Ed.), *Growth, profits, and property: Essays in the revival of political economy* (pp. 29-40). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ilyenkov, E. V. (1982). *The dialectics of the abstract and the concrete in Marx's capital*. Moscow: Progress.
- Jung, C. G. (1963). *Memories, dreams, reflections* (R. Winston & C. Winston, Trans.). London: Collins and Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kant, I. (1964). *Groundwork of the metaphysic of morals* (H. J. Paton, Trans.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Kelly, P. (2007). *Locke's second treatise of government*. London: Continuum.
- Kumar, C. (2008). A pragmatist spin on analytical Marxism and methodological individualism. *Philosophical Papers*, 37(2), 185-211.
- Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Contemporary political philosophy: An introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lebowitz, M. A. (1988). Is 'analytical Marxism' Marxism? *Science and Society*, 52(2), 191-214.

- Liorente, R. (1998). Book review: Self-ownership, freedom, and equality by G. A. Cohen. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 30, 108-112.
- Lobkowicz, N. (1969). Karl Marx and Max Stirner. In F. J. Adelman (Ed.), *Demythologizing Marxism: A series of studies on Marxism* (pp. 64-95). Netherlands: The Hague.
- Locke, J. (1937). *Treatise of civil government; and a letter concerning toleration* (C. L. Sherman, Ed.). New York, NY: Appleton Century Crofts.
- Lukes, S. (1985). *Marxism and morality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lyons, D. (1981). The new Indian claims and original rights to land. In J. Paul (Ed.), *Reading Nozick: Essays on anarchy, state, and utopia* (pp. 355-379). Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Lyons, D. (1984). Utility and rights. In J. Waldron (Ed.), *Theories of rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marx, K. (1933). *Critique of the Gotha programme* (C. P. Dutt, Trans.). New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K. (1936). Selected works: Volume II. In V. V. Adoratsky (Ed.) & C. P. Dutt (Trans.), *Karl Marx: Selected works in two volumes*. New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K. (1963). *The poverty of philosophy*. New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K. (1968). *Selected essays* (H. J. Stenning, Trans.). Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press.
- Marx, K. (1969). *Theories of surplus value: Part I (Volume IV of capital)* (S. W. Ryazanskaya, Ed.; E. Burns, Trans.). Moscow: Progress.
- Marx, K. (1970). *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. (M. Dobb, Ed.). New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K. (1972a). *Capital: Volume I* (F. Engels, Ed.). New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K. (1972b). *Capital: Volume III* (F. Engels, Ed.). New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K. (1986). *Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844*. (D. J. Struik, Ed.). New York, NY: International.

- Marx, K. (1990). Results of the immediate process of production. In D. Fernbach & B. Fowkes (Eds.), *Capital: Volume I: A critique of political economy*. London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review.
- Marx, K. (1993). *Grundrisse: Foundations of the critique of political economy* (M. Nicolaus, Ed.). London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1956). *The holly family or critique of critical critique* (R. Dixon, Trans.). Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1969a). Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected works (Volume II). In *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected works in three volumes*. Moscow: Progress.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1969b). Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected works (Volume I). In *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected works in three volumes*. Moscow: Progress.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970). Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected works (Volume III). In *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected works in three volumes*. Moscow: Progress.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1975). *Collected works: Volume 3*. Moscow: Progress.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1975b). *Collected works: Volume 34*. New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1976). *Collected works: Volume 5*. New York, NY: International.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2009). *The communist manifesto*. New York, NY: International.
- Maslow, A. H. (1987). *Motivation and personality* (R. Frager, Ed.). New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Narveson, J. (1998). Libertarianism vs. Marxism: Reflection on G. A. Cohen's self-ownership, freedom and equality. *Journal of Ethics*, 2, 1-26.
- North, D. C. (1981). *Structure and change in economic history*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, state, and utopia*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Okin, S. M. (1989). *Justice, gender, and the family*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Otsuka, M. (2003). *Libertarianism without inequality*. Oxford: Clarendon.

- Papaioannou, T. (2010). *Robert Nozick's moral and political theory: A philosophical critique of libertarianism*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Polanyi, K. (1947). Our obsolete market mentality: Civilization must find a new thought pattern. *Commentary*, III, 109-117.
- Polanyi, K. (2001). *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Polanyi-Lewitt, K. (1995). Toward alternatives: Re-reading the great transformation. *Monthly Review*, 47(2), 1-16.
- Proudhon, P. J. (1970). *What is property: An inquiry into the principle of right and government*. New York, NY: Dover Publications.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Rider, R. (1999). Conflicts, the sire of exchange: Violence is the sire of all the world's values. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 40, 217-232.
- Riley, H. T. (1909). The comedies of Terence. In M. M. Miller (Ed.), *The latin classics: Drama, ethics*. New York, NY: V. Parke and Company.
- Roemer, J. E. (1986). *Analytical Marxism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rousseau, J. J. (1984). *A discourse on inequality* (M. Cranston, Trans.). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Runes, D. D. (1984). *Dictionary of philosophy*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld.
- Schmidt, D. (2005). History and patterns. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 22(1), 148-177.
- Sen, A. (1996). Rationality, joy, and freedom. *Critical Review*, 10(4), 481-494. doi: 10.1080/08913819608443434.
- Sweezy, P. M. (1968). *The theory of capitalist development: Principles of Marxian political economy*. New York, NY: Modern Reader Paperbacks.
- Sydney, S. (2010). Reading capital in Sydney. *Reading capital in Sydney*. Retrieved from <http://readingcapitalsydney.wordpress.com/2010/02/22/chapter-8-constant-and-variable-capital/>.
- Taylor, C. (1985). *Philosophical papers: Volume 2, philosophy and the human sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Terence, P. (n.d.). *Pub. Terentii comoediae sex. A.R wintertonio recognitiae* (Vol. UMI Collection: Wing / 2777:24) [Microform]. Scotland: National Library of Scotland.
- Vallentyne, P., Steiner, H., & Otsuka, M. (2005). Why left-libertarianism is not incoherent, indeterminate, or irrelevant: A reply to Fried. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33(2), 201-215. doi: 10.1111/j.1088-4963.2005.00030.x.
- Valls, A. (1999). The libertarian case for affirmative action. *Social Theory & Practice*, 25(2), 229-323.
- Van Parijs, P. (1995). *Real freedom for all: What (if anything) can justify capitalism?* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Veblen, T. (1898). The beginnings of ownership. *American Journal of Sociology*, 4(3), 352-365. doi: 10.1086/210805.
- Veblen, T. (1908). Professor Clark's economics. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 22(2), 147-195.
- Warren, P. (1994). Self-ownership, reciprocity, and exploitation, or why Marxists shouldn't be afraid of Robert Nozick. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 24(1), 33-56.
- Wilde, L. (1998). *Ethical Marxism and its radical critics*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Williamson, O. E. (2005). The economics of governance. *The American Economic Review*, 95(2), 1-12.
- Wolff, J. (1991). *Robert Nozick: Property, justice, and the minimal state*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Wood, A. (1972). The Marxian critique of justice. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1(3), 244-282.
- Wood, A. (1980). Marxian critique of justice. In M. Cohen, T. Nagel, & T. Scanlon (Eds.), *Marx, justice, and history* (pp. 3-41). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wood, A. (1986). Marx and equality. In J. E. Roemer (Ed.), *Analytical Marxism: Studies in Marxism and social theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Young, G. (1981). Doing Marx justice. In K. Nielsen & S. C. Patten (Eds.), *Marx and morality* (pp. 251-268). Guelph, Ontario: Canadian Association for Pub. in Philosophy.